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Onslaught
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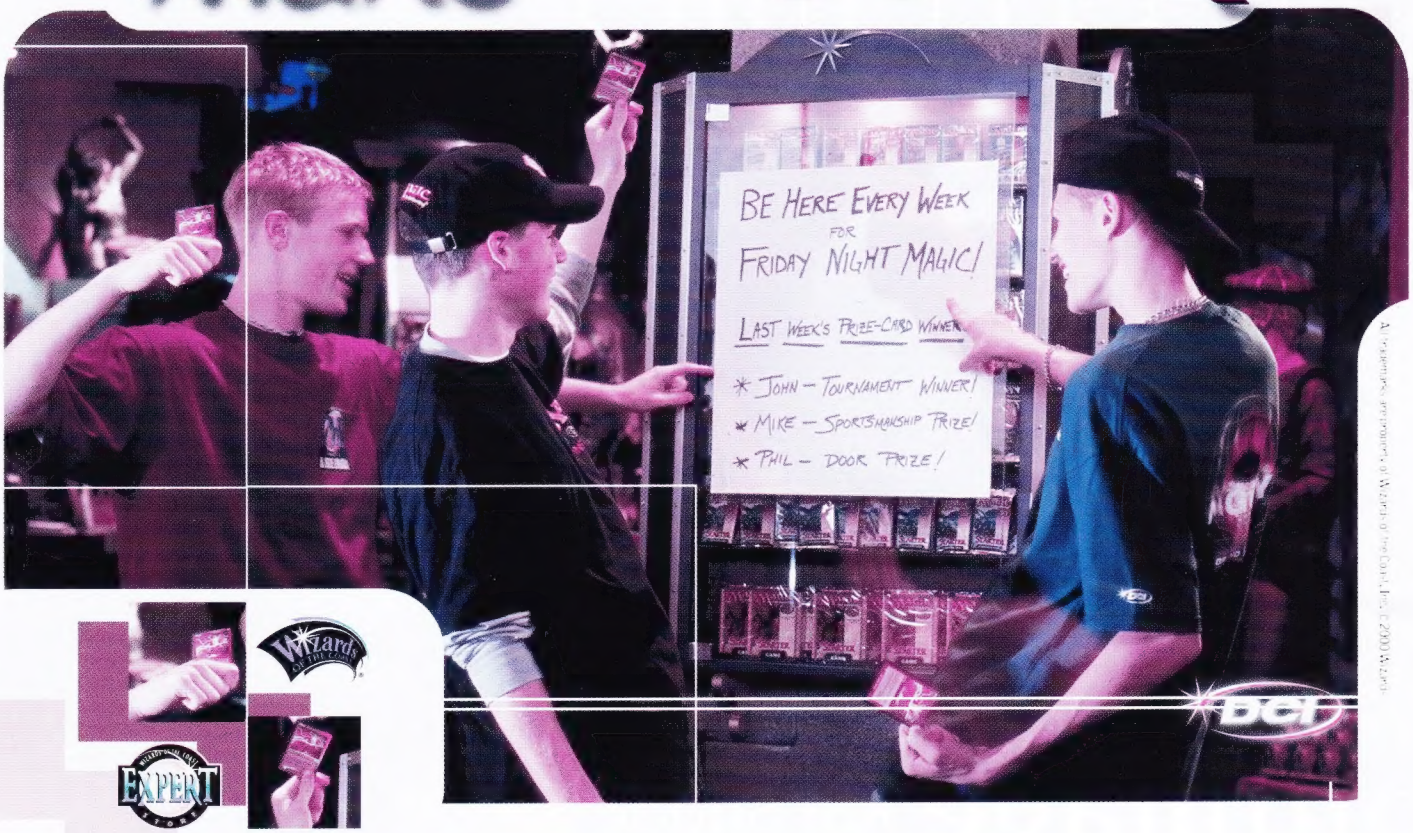

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Carlos Romão Wins Worlds

A Brazilian in Australia

by Josh Bennett

There really is nothing like the **Magic** World Championships. There's a fever of excitement that spreads through the competitors. After all, it's the big dance, bigger than any Pro Tour. Five days long, with eighteen rounds of singles action across three formats, and that's not to mention the frenzy of the national team competition. Everyone's got their best game on. Months of preparation come to fruition over a single weekend.

This year was no different. More than 240 players mobbed the Hordern Pavillion in beautiful Sydney, Australia in the hunt for **Magic**'s most prestigious title. It was a strong showing considering the tremendous travel costs faced by those coming in from the Americas and Europe. In all, 45 countries were represented, and 38 national teams were fighting it out in the team competition.

First up was Standard Constructed. The release of *Judgment* shook things up. The specter of "tech" hung over everything—who had it, and was it any good? Walking around the tables during round one, it was clear that Psychatog still ruled. New builds drew additional power from Cunning or Burning Wish. Some players were banking their hopes on a version that splashed green for Pernicious Deed.

After the wave of Doctor Teeth, almost half the field in all, the most-represented decks were various flavors of Opposition and English "Deep Dog". In fact, blue-green madness was the only significantly played deck to post results over 50 percent. The tempo game worked well against such a control-dominated field.

Fuelling the blue-green hype was thirteen year-old Cole Swannack, the diminutive New Zealand National Champion. He shocked naysayers by posting a 5-1 record on the first day with that deck, taking down Gary Wise and Singapore's Albertus Law along the way. After his fifth-round feature match against Wise, he found himself the darling of the pro community.

Eight players busted out the Hunting Grounds deck that took the day at Grand Prix–Taipei. Sylvain Lauriol, Top 8 finisher at Pro Tour–Osaka, took this new take on old school control to a respectable 5-1. The big innovation of the format came from the American cadre dubbed "The Mini-Colony". Featuring the combined talents of Brian Kibler, Brian Hegstad, Ben Rubin, and Eric Froehlich, the team was a force from which most expected big things. They did not disappoint, turning up with a green-white-red beatdown deck called "Red Zone 2K2". They started out strong, but ended the day with only average results.

After six rounds, the big surprise was who ruled the standings. Latin America was out in force, putting three players in the top ten, headed by the undefeated Carlos "The Brazillian Huey" Romão and his blue-black Cunning Wish–Psychatog deck. He was joined at 6-0 by Victor van den Broek of the Netherlands, playing Burning Wish 'Tog, and Malaysian National Champion Sim Han How, playing "Squirrel-Opposition". The U.S. pros put up a strong initial presence, with Dan Clegg, Matt Rubin, Alex Shvartsman, and William Jensen all weighing in at 5-1.

Back: Tuomas Kotiranta, Mark Ziegner, Sim Han How, Carlos Eduardo Romão, Dave Humphereys. Front: Diego Ostrovich, John Larkin, Ken Krouner.

That set the stage for Day 2, the Draft day. The consensus among the pros was that, with the inclusion of *Judgment,* red was the color to avoided. Black was a gamble, relying too much on *Torment.* An opponent cut off in the first pack could still switch into black and steal all your best cards. Blue, on the other hand, was incredibly deep. Exaggerated estimations of the number of blue players a table could support abounded.

Six players showed they had what it takes. Finnish National Champion Tuomas Kotiranta led the 6-0 charge that included Rory Draxler of the United States, Tsuyoshi Ikeda of Japan, German national team member Mark Ziegner, and American pros Mike Pustilnik and Ken Krouner. Krouner in particular was happy to have swept the day. He started off Day 1 at an ignominious 0-3 before being awarded a bye. He won his next eight matches.

The big question going into Day 3 was the health of the *Odyssey* Block Constructed (OBC) format. Pro Tour–Osaka had come and gone, supposedly only leaving two viable decks in its wake: green-

blue and monoblack. Many of the game's best believed OBC was an investigated format, and devoted the bulk of their playtesting time to Standard. They figured on nailing the first two days and cruising to a 3-3 record on coinflip matches, hoping it would be enough for Top 8.

Things were not as expected. There were six big decks in the field. The blue-green deck, previously represented by Ken Ho's winning design from Osaka, had splintered into three distinct subtypes: madness, threshold, and Quiet Speculation. Jeroen Remie, Amiel Tenenbaum, and Leonardo Uzcategui scored 6-0 with madness, the most successful of the three. Dave Humpherys marked 6-0 with threshold, earning himself a spot in the Top 8. Kai Budde took Speculation to 5-1. Dario Minieri blurred the lines with his madness-Speculation hybrid that earned him a 6-0 as well.

Next up was monoblack control, virtually unchanged since Osaka. Gary Wise and Yujian Zhou of Singapore rode it to flawless records. Avri Limpadanai shocked the field by serving up his own 6-0 with green-white madness. Rounding things out was the big surprise of the tournament: Team Punisher's blue-white Speculation, a "White Weenie" deck that keyed off Battle Screech and Glory. Tomi Walamies drove it to 6-0, and teammate Anton Jonsson would have made Top 8 on its back if not for a match-losing mistake against Ken Krouner in the final round.

Now if that sounds like a lot of 6-0's on the day, it was. Last year's Worlds only saw four undefeated decks on Day 3. For there to be twice as many this time around speaks volumes about the influence that deck design and playtesting can have on results.

The six rounds decided who would have their chance on Sunday. In addition to Humpherys and Krouner, there was some serious global representation. Four National Champions demonstrated just how much they merited their titles by claming a place at the final tables: Diego Ostrovich of Argentina, John Larkin of Ireland, Sim Han How of Malaysia, and Tuomas Kotiranta of Finland. It was a particular honor for Han How to be the first Malaysian to make a Pro Tour Top 8 at this, his first Pro Tour event. Rounding out the eight were Mark Ziegner and Carlos Romão of Brazil, who hadn't slowed down since going undefeated on Day 1.

Day 4 was the supposed day of rest for the Top 8 competitors, but only Humpherys, Krouner, and Romão got to take it easy. The rest of the bunch were slugging it out in the Team Rochester rounds. Of course, when you're in the Top 8, taking it easy means playtesting your quarterfinal matchup until the wee hours of the morning.

The final day started far too early for the competitors, who stumbled into their chairs bleary-eyed and nervous. Kotiranta drew Romão, and theirs was the first match to finish. Romão dispatched Kotiranta's blue-black-red 'Tog in three straight games, putting him to 15-0 in Standard games on the weekend. Next to fall was Han How, at the hands of Mark Ziegner. Though Squirrel-Opposition is thought to trump Psychatog, the addition of red to Ziegner's design helped him cruise to a 3-0 victory.

Krouner's Opposition was faring a little better against Ostrovich and his blue-black 'Tog. He stole the first game off an aggressive play by Ostrovich, but in the games to follow, Ostrovich was never on the back foot. He stepped out of the Feature Match Area to the high-fives of Romão and their teammates. That left the Psychatog mirror between Larkin and Humpherys. Humpherys dropped game two to a brutal mana stumble, but seemed in full control in the others.

In the semifinals, the two Latin Americans faced each other. For this event, players from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Venezuela had worked together, something unheard of in Latin America. Calling themselves Bandana, they playetested endlessly and shared all their results. The final product was this matchup and a guarantee of one of their own in the finals. Ostrovich was the first to hand Romão a game loss. The members of Bandana had baffled their opponents by letting card-drawing resolve because they understood that modern Psychatog builds left little room for countermagic. They saved their counters for the only cards that mattered: Upheaval and Psychatog. This match was no exception. Fact or Fictions resolved all over the place. The tone of the match was different, too. Smiles and jokes replaced stern concentration. They split the first four, then played an anti-climactic fifth where Romão mulliganed into gas and Ostrovich's two-lander failed to develop.

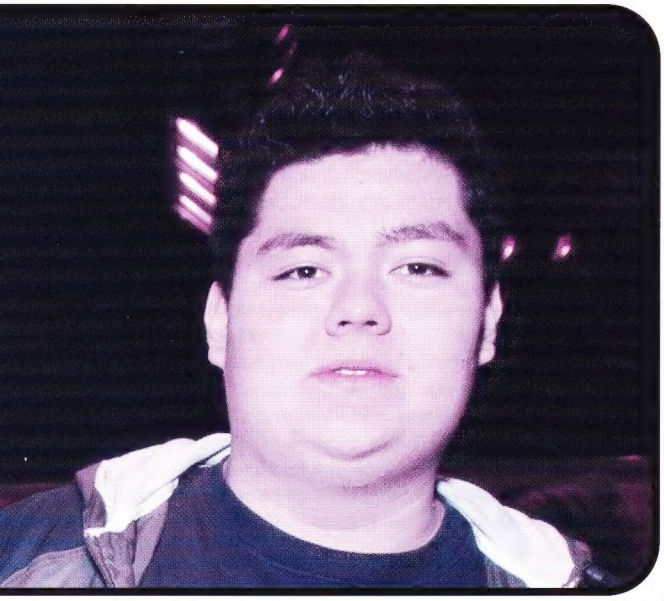
Opposite them, Ziegner had taken the first game against Humpherys, and now they were mired in the second. Ziegner had Lobotomized Humpherys for his Psychatogs early, seemingly giving him the game. With more cards in his library than the American, he changed his plan to decking Humpherys. He even went so far as to let two Engineered Plauges resolve, negating his own Psychatogs. They targeted each other with Deep Analyses, and Humpherys reset the board with Upheaval. Ziegner saw what was coming and tried to Memory Lapse a Duress onto the top of his library. Humpherys Counterspelled. He drew the last card of his library and dropped Cephalid Coliseum, using it to deck Ziegner in one of the hardest-fought matches the Pro Tour has seen. Ziegner shrugged it off and went on to take the next two and the match, helped out by mana troubles on Humpherys's side.

When Ziegner returned to the final table, he was all smiles. Together with Kai Budde and Felix Schneiders, he had just taken the national team competition for Germany. If he could beat Romão, he would duplicate the sweep that only Jon Finkel before him had done. Romão had all of Latin America cheering him on. This would be no walk in the park. As it was with Ostrovich, they traded games early. After Romão took the third, Ziegner seemed to grasp the enormous danger his opponent's unorthodox strategy represented. He reworked his sideboarding and burst out with a brutal opening. Romão managed a struggle to stay alive, and at first it looked like he might escape, but Ziegner shut the door and forced a final game. They both resolved early Psychatogs. Romão chose his battles wisely, and stripped Ziegner's hand before resolving a Fact or Fiction. Two turns later, his advantage overwhelmed Ziegner's 'Tog, and he attacked for the win. Immediately the cheers went up.

Not a bad way to make your mark on the **Magic** map—not only win Worlds, but do so by being light-years ahead in your understanding of the metagame's most important matchup. Congratulations to Carlos Eduardo Romão, 2002 **Magic** World Champion!

Top 8 Profiles

by Aaron Forsythe



Carlos Eduardo Romão

Because of the different formats played at the **Magic** World Championships, the Top 8 is often composed of Standard decks that didn't exactly tear up the field on Day 1. Knowing that, it makes sense that the favorite to win it all would be one of the few players whose decks performed up to snuff.

Carlos Eduardo Romão, a 20-year-old marketing student from São Paulo, Brazil, was one such player. He piloted his blue-black "Cunning 'Tog" deck to a 6-0 finish on Day 1 and then sliced through the Top 8 on his way to becoming the 2002 **Magic** World Champion.

Prior to his Worlds win, Romão made the Top 8 at Grand Prix–São Paulo in 1999, and did one better by winning Grand Prix–Rio de Janeiro in 2001. He placed in the Top 4 of the 2000 Latin American Championships, placed the Top 8 of 2002 Brazilian Nationals, and was invited to Worlds as one of the top rated Latin American players. But all of that pales to success on the game's biggest stage.

Latin America has never had a Pro Tour Top 8, but now, together with Argentina's Diego Ostrovich, Romão has given them two. Romão and Ostrovich, alongside all the other Latin American players that were qualified for the tournament, worked together on decks and strategies using a mailing list. The list included players from Brazil and Argentina, as well as Chile, Venezuela, and Uruguay, and was known as "La Bandana" or the "Latin American Alliance".

The Alliance was obviously a success. Some people claimed that the loss of the big Latin American Championship tournament would decimate the pro **Magic** communities in South America, but instead it seems to have galvanized them into one dominant force. The strategies devised by the team involving the all-important Psychatog mirror match left many pundits shaking their heads at tournament's end, but the results are indisputable.

¡Latinoamerica arribe!

Mark Ziegner

Mark Ziegner came into the World Championships as a footnote to Kai Budde—a lucky member of Budde's national team that was destined to play in the team finals on Sunday. Germany did win the team championship, largely in part to Budde's understanding of three-man Rochester draft, but Ziegner stepped out of Budde's shadow and stole a chunk of the spotlight for himself.

Ziegner, a 29-year-old legal worker from Mainz, Germany, has been to four previous Pro Tours, but had never before made a dollar. His best accomplishment to date was a prior appearance on a less-successful German national team. Now, his second place finish combined with the German team win has netted him well over $30,000.

Ziegner didn't get much practice in for this event—he just played with the "normal people" at his local card shop. His group copied Budde's Psychatog deck from European Championships and tweaked it a bit, and that deck got him three wins and a draw in Day 1. For Day 2, Budde suggested that Ziegner draft blue-white, which suited Ziegner as he doesn't like to draft aggressive green-red cards. Budde's advice was sound; Ziegner tallied a 6-0 mark in the Booster Draft portion with blue and white cards. Looking to cement a good team standing for Germany, Budde gave Ziegner his Block Constructed deck, a blue-green build based on Grizzly Fate. Ziegner won three of the first four rounds on Day 3 and then drew twice to make the final 8.

After a surprise 3-0 win in the quarterfinals over Sim Han How's "Squirrel-Opposition" deck, Ziegner defeated American Dave Humpherys 3-1 in a grueling Psychatog on Psychatog match. Then he drafted and played the team finals before finally falling to Carlos Romão in the finals.

That final loss may have caused Ziegner to fall short of joining Jon Finkel as the only player to win both the individual and team championships in the same year, but Ziegner isn't complaining. As the event staff brought the table of trophies for the top finishers onto the stage at the end of the tournament, Ziegner smiled. "Nice trophies," he said, "I'll take two."

Diego Ostrovich

Two-time Argentinean National Champion Diego Ostrovich has qualified for many professional **Magic** tournaments but has almost always lacked the funds to attend. Now that he's finished third at the World Championships and earned a good deal of prize money, his travel woes are over.

Ostrovich joins Carlos Romão as the first Latin Americans to make the Top 8 of a Pro Tour, due largely to the "joining of forces" of many South American players to form "La Bandana", a now-formidable pro team. And with Romão winning the event, Ostrvich will also get to attend the **Magic** Invitational in Seattle, marking the first time two Latin Americans will be at that event as well.

As national champion, Ostrovich had to pull double duty during the event, worrying about his team's success as much as his own. Luckily, his stellar record—13-3-2, good enough for first place after eighteen rounds—translated directly into success for the team. Argentina was only a point behind Germany after the Swiss portion, and although the team drafts didn't go their way, they still wound up fifth overall.

Ostrovich built up to this moment for a while. Apart from the two national titles, the twenty-year-old was a finalist at the 2001 Latin American Championships and made the Top 8 at Grand Prix–Buenos Aires.

Dave Humpherys

For a long time, Dave Humpherys was known for two things: ninth-place finishes and success in the team format. After finishing ninth at Pro Tour–Paris and ninth at Pro Tour–Rome, Humpherys broke out—first, a Top 8 at 1999 Pro Tour–New York, then a win in the very first team Pro Tour in Washington, D.C. alongside Darwin Kastle and Rob Dougherty as "Your Move Games".

More recently, however, Dave's individual accomplishments have been very impressive. He won the *Invasion* Block Constructed Grand Prix in Minneapolis, then put up a Top 8 in the Extended Pro Tour–New Orleans before making it two in one year here at Worlds, where he finished fourth.

Worlds was supposed to be part of a vacation for Humpherys. Having just finished his PhD in Biology at MIT, Dave decided to engage in a little R&R, taking an 80-day trot around the globe. He started by visiting most of Europe and parts of Southeast Asia, and planned to be in Australia during the **Magic** World Championships before moving on to New Zealand, Hawaii, and Alaska.

So how did the 30-year-old Dr. Humpherys find time to playtest during this excursion? "I haven't touched a card in a month and a half," he confided, "except for one afternoon I spent in a card shop in Finland," where he happened into two-time PT winner Tommi Hovi. Small world.

So what now? Dave will not be returning to Boston, where he spent the last seven and a half years studying. Instead, he'll be headed to San Diego where he grew up, hoping to land a job in the biotech field. As for YMG, "We'll still work together. I'll just have to introduce myself to ***Magic** Online.*"

Sim Han How

There are "firsts" at every Worlds, and Sim Han How adds one to the list: first Malaysian to make a Pro Tour Top 8. And he did it at his first Pro Tour.

Han How, an 18-year-old IT student at College Bandar Utama in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, came out of nowhere to dominate the tournament. He ran the tables on Day 1—a perfect 6-0—with a blue-green-red Opposition deck, and his 5-1 in Draft kept him in first place. He stumbled a bit on Day 3, going 2-3-1, but the two wins were enough to let him intentionally draw in the last round to clinch a Top 8 berth.

Han How admits that, "This was all very unexpected." Prior to this championship season, his only accomplishment in the game was making the Top 8 at Malaysian Nationals two years ago. This year, he took the crown in his home country, and he hasn't slowed down since.

His playtest group in Kuala Lumpur is composed of a bunch of local players, none of whom have had success on this level, but by playing and drafting twice a week, they helped Han How get the skills he needed compete on the Pro Tour.

Han How's Standard deck was a take-off on the Squirrel-Opposition deck Eugene Harvey used to win U.S. Nationals, with a few modifications. "I changed a few cards around," said Han How. "The big change was putting in Phantom Centaurs. Plus, I changed the sideboard around." Unfortunately, those changes weren't enough to overcome Mark Ziegner in the quarterfinals, where Han How fell in three straight.

John Larkin

Rugged Irish National Champion John Larkin may come off as a happy-go-lucky guy, but he is truly one of the game's hard workers. When the 24-year-old Dubliner qualified for Worlds, he didn't rest on his laurels. Instead, he set out to qualify for even more events. He won a Pro Tour Qualifier for Pro Tour–Houston, and took two of his friends—creating what he called an "Irish Raiding Party"—into Scotland to win a qualifier for Pro Tour–Boston—all that while practicing for Worlds.

Larkin works so hard because he knows it pays off. During his **Magic** career, which started around the time of *Ice Age*, he has won Irish Nationals three times and qualified for numerous Pro Tours, including the Block Constructed 2000 Pro Tour–New York, where he made his other Top 8.

Larkin's success help put his Irish team at the top of the standings for the first two days of competition, but a collapse by the other players on the Block Constructed day left them too far back in the standings to make a serious run at the title. "After we lost our first draft, I knew it was over," lamented Larkin. But it was fun while it lasted, and his own Top 8 was all the justification his work ethic needed.

Tuomas Kotiranta

A few months ago, it looked like eighteen-year-old Tuomas Kotiranta wouldn't be going to his country's Nationals, let alone the Top 8 of Worlds. Ranked 33rd in Finland when the top 32 qualified for the National tournament, Tuomas managed to advance from the final qualifier to Nationals. There, a third place finish earned him a spot at Worlds. Once in, Tuomas had no time to playtest because of a summer job, but Finnish Champion Tomi Walamies and his Punisher teammates decided to furnish the Swedish and Finnish teams with decks for Standard and Block Constructed.

"I thought I'd be a good tourist," said the soft-spoken Kotiranta of his pre-tourney chances at World Championships. A fisherman, snowboarder, and rollerblader, Kotiranta has been playing competitively since Urza's Saga, but with his time split between so many hobbies, he'd been hard-pressed to find success up until now. Worlds was his first Pro Tour, and his only prior international achievement came this year at European Championships, where he finished 41st. He willingly gives all the credit in the world to Walamies and his Punisher teammates for helping him get this far.

Ken Krouner

Ken Krouner, 24, of Rochester, New York, has been playing **Magic** since *Antiquities* was released in early 1994. Krouner's first Pro Tour was New York in 1999, but the big finishes started arriving just recently. With fourteenth at Grand Prix–Houston, seventh at Grand Prix–New Jersey, ninth at U.S. Nationals, and a Top 8 here at Worlds, Krouner has emerged as one of the big-name American players.

His claim to fame at Worlds is starting off 0-3, getting a bye in round 4, and then ripping off eleven straight wins including a 6-0 on Draft day. Krouner credits fellow pro player Gary Wise for this turnaround, saying Gary took him aside after his abysmal beginning and told him to change his attitude. "I had to triple mulligan twice in the first three rounds, and I didn't think losing was my fault, my deck just hated me or something. Gary told me to shake that attitude . . . and get my head in the game," said Krouner.

Krouner also owes a lot to fellow upstate New Yorker Ed Fear, who made sure Krouner was at the event by buying him a plane ticket when his first option fell through. Fear actually dropped from the tournament at the end to watch Krouner finish his miracle run. "I couldn't be happier for Ken," said Fear.

Germany Conquers the World

Kai Budde Leads His Country to Victory

by Toby Wachter

Traditionally, the team tournament at Worlds has been dominated by the United States. The U.S. national team was often packed with accomplished pros, whether it was Justice, Stern, Leiher, and Long in 1995; Long, Bentley, Place, and Baxter in 1996; or even Finkel, Benafel, Forsythe, and Hernandez in 2000. Historically speaking, this dominance was a product of the way **Magic** started and evolved. The game was created by an American and produced by an American company. Years later, the game was translated into different languages as it grew into the international phenomenon we're familiar with today. As **Magic** grew globally, the rest of the world started to play catch-up with the United States. Europeans such as Olle Räde and Kai Budde dominated tournaments, and the Japanese attracted attention with creative players such as Jin Okamoto, Satoshi Nakamura, and Katsuhiro Mori. Even with all this growth, one barrier stood in the way for the rest of the world: the Worlds team championship. Many Europeans won Pro Tour events, and Japan's Tsuyoshi Fujita came one match away from doing the same, but the fact that the United States still dominated the World Championships was a lasting reminder of America's dominance. The days of the United States running roughshod over the rest of the world may have come to an end, but it would take a triumph over them in the biggest of international competitions to drive the point home.

Aside from one Canadian victory, the United States had never let up its hold on the team portion of Worlds. Once 2001 came along, most of the world (including many Americans) thought the dominance was about to end. Instead of being represented by mainstays such as Jon Finkel or Mike Long, Pro Tour champion Trevor Blackwell was flanked by virtual unknowns Eugene Harvey and Brian Hegstad. Whether you looked in magazines or on the Internet, the names "Harvey" and "Hegstad" were always attached to the phrase "relatively unknown". As a result, many anticipated an American downfall in Toronto, but it was not to be. After a 6-12 record in the Standard portion of Worlds 2001, the U.S. national team fought back and managed to bring home the title once again. In the process, Eugene Harvey and Brian Hegstad established themselves as top-level competitors, with Harvey's 6-0 showing in the draft portion of the event serving as a preview of things to come.

After Toronto was in the history books, Americans were able to breathe a sigh of relief. They had left with the championship once again, and the rest of the world would have to wait another year. Once that year was up, the world was definitely ready to come back with a vengeance. Even before U.S. Nationals had provided a U.S. national team, many were speculating that America wouldn't have a very good chance. The Netherlands produced an incredibly intimidating team with Tom van de Logt, Kamiel Cornelissen, and Noah Boeken, while Kai Budde, Mark Ziegner, and Felix Schneiders lined up to represent Germany. The writing was on the wall, and the Americans were hoping Nationals would yield a powerhouse team to face the challenge of Worlds. In a twist of fate, that was not exactly what happened. Eugene Harvey, who had been a "relatively unknown" player on the previous year's team, had established himself as one of America's top players through the 2002 season and was now heading the national team as its champion. This made him the accomplished veteran, while two new "unknown commodities", Andrew Ranks and Eric Franz, joined him. It was a situation that mirrored the previous year, but this time the European countries seemed set to overpower the Americans. As a result, the American team found itself in a lose/lose situation. If they won the tournament, it would be an expected repeat of history. If they lost, the streak would be over. Competing on the Pro Tour may have prepared Eugene Harvey for this kind of pressure, but his teammates Ranks and Franz came to Sydney with zero pro points each.

Mark Ziegner, Kai Budde, and Felix Schneiders; the 2002 German national team.

With all these questions waiting to be answered, the world's best traveled to Australia to end the speculation. After the end of Day 1's Standard portion, Ireland was on top of the standings. Irish National Champion John Larkin and Dave Kearney played identical Psychatog decks, while Cormac Smyth ran "Squirrel-Opposition". Sweden finished the day in second, headed by Anton Jonsson, one of the season's breakout stars. The United States ended the day in sixth, and had some catching up to do if they wanted to play on the Sunday stage. Perhaps the biggest story of the day was thirteen-year-old New Zealand National Champion Cole Swannack going 5-1, bringing his team into seventh place. Ireland kept their lead to

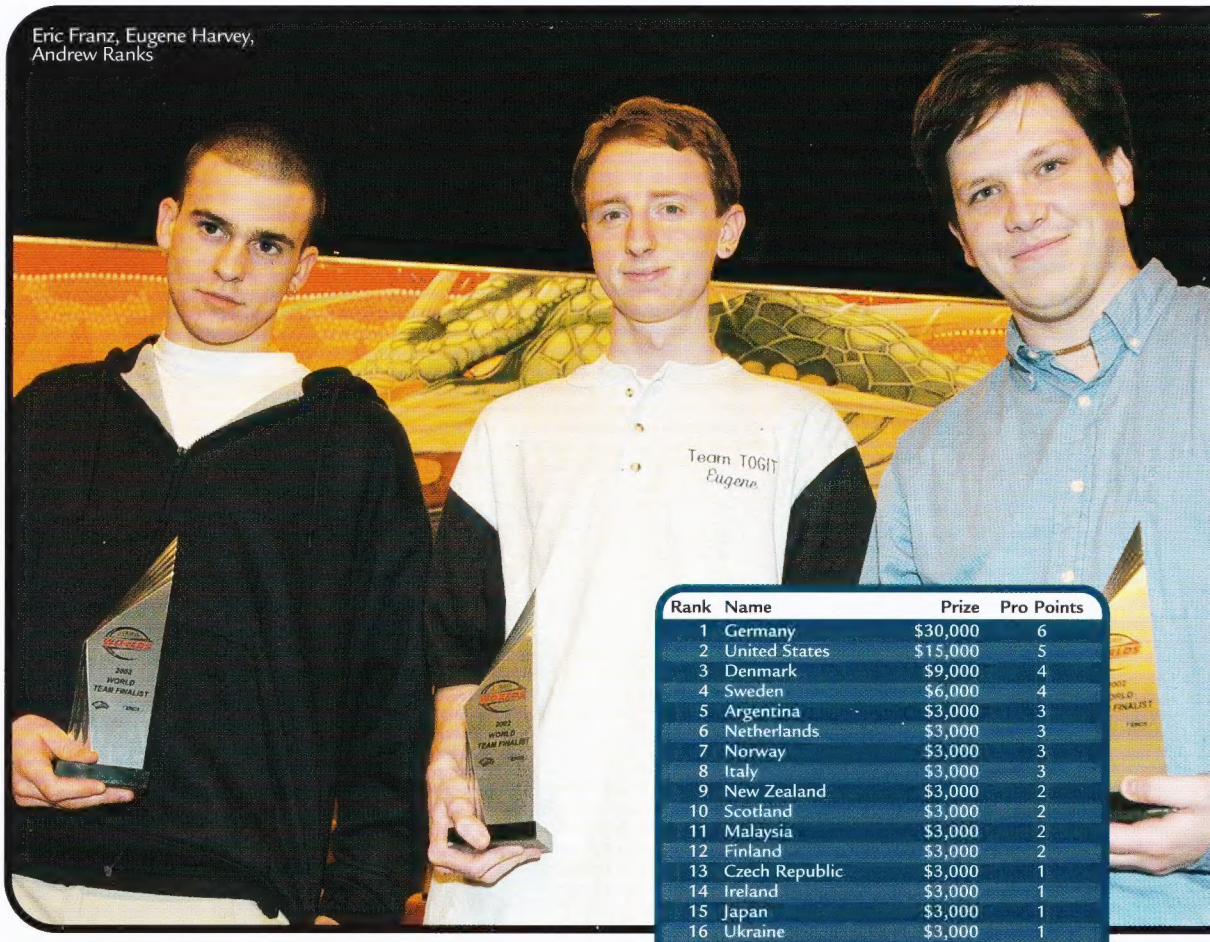
the second day, while the favored Dutch team fought their way into second, pushing Sweden back into third. The United States fell back to fifteenth, and many disregarded any notion of the team title coming back to America.

The final day of individual competition saw the Argentinean national team maneuver into second place, with the help of Diego Ostrovich's first seed Top 8 finish. On top of them in first was the German team, which was carried mostly by eventual finalist Mark Ziegner. The Dutch team was still in contention in third place, while the Americans were seemingly out of the running in fourteenth place. One more day of Team Rochester would decide the finals, and what a day it was. Making a comeback that seemed too cliché to be true, the Americans fought back with a vengeance. They beat Norway and Ireland in the first two rounds, while Germany closed the gap, beating the two closest teams, Argentina and The Netherlands. After a victory over Scotland, the Americans had a slim chance to make their way to the finals. Germany was already a lock for the finals, and intended to concede to their last round opponents if it meant shutting out the Americans. However, fate put the decision in the hands of Harvey, Ranks, and Franz. They were paired against Germany, and would have to beat the team on top that had intended to shut them out, while Denmark was in the position of having to defeat Argentina.

As if Fox Studios in Sydney was the site for a cheesy "overcome all odds" movie, both matches went in favor of the United States, giving the Americans a shot at the finals. In their way was one final tiebreaker match against Denmark, and in a tense third deciding game between Eric Franz and Peter Laier, the American discarded Glory to Dwarven Strike Force to do the seemingly impossible. The American team had gone 5-0 on the day and would face the imposing German team in the finals. It was 2001 all over again as the Americans came back from being counted out and fought their way back to the top.

However, there was one piece of business left. German National Champion Kai Budde is the last person in the world you want sitting across from you as you shuffle up a deck, and his teammate Mark Ziegner was at work producing a legacy of his own. Ziegner won his first two matches in the individual Top 8, and with one match left against Carlos Romão to determine the World Champion, he sat down to draft against the Americans with both money and national pride on the line. In an exchange that shows why Team Rochester is one of the most skill based formats around, the teams took turns trying to outwit each other. Franz had been drafting red-white, so Budde told Schneiders to draft green, producing a better matchup. Harvey noticed this and called an audible very quickly, instructing Franz to go blue-white. This worked out well, as Franz won despite Schneiders's two Beast Attacks. Still, the audible produced some confusion, and Harvey went into red-green, making him easy prey for Budde's white-blue deck. Particularly notable was the fact that Budde drafted multiple Cagemails and used them very effectively, shutting down Harvey's offense on the ground while the German's big fliers came through for the win. Ziegner's black-red deck beat Ranks's black-green as well, giving the Germans the Worlds team championship.

With the team title residing in Europe for the first time in history, the Germans have to be concerned about trying to maintain a legacy of their own. Their dominance in Sydney made them a Goliath that even America's David couldn't slay twice. With that dominance comes the expectation of victory, and that pressure is likely to be apparent at Worlds 2003 in Berlin. With a hometown crowd watching, can Germany repeat to the cheers of their fellow countrymen, or will the title move once again? America will certainly be looking to get back what has historically been a part of its legacy, while other European countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands are eager to show they are the best in the world. Or perhaps Japan or a South American country will surprise everyone, bringing the title to its third continent in three years. With all these elements already in place and a year still to go, Berlin may be even more exciting than Sydney was. Still, that is a year from now, and the Germans can enjoy the time in between knowing that the best their country had to offer beat the best from all over the world. The title resides in Germany now, and if the rest of the world wants it, they have to come into Deutschland to take it.



Eric Franz, Eugene Harvey, Andrew Ranks

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Germany	$30,000	6
2	United States	$15,000	5
3	Denmark	$9,000	4
4	Sweden	$6,000	4
5	Argentina	$3,000	3
6	Netherlands	$3,000	3
7	Norway	$3,000	3
8	Italy	$3,000	3
9	New Zealand	$3,000	2
10	Scotland	$3,000	2
11	Malaysia	$3,000	2
12	Finland	$3,000	2
13	Czech Republic	$3,000	1
14	Ireland	$3,000	1
15	Japan	$3,000	1
16	Ukraine	$3,000	1
17	Hungary	$3,000	
18	Brazil	$3,000	
19	Hong Kong	$3,000	
20	Thailand	$3,000	
21	Canada	$3,000	
22	Switzerland	$3,000	
23	France	$3,000	
24	England	$3,000	
25	Spain	$3,000	
26	South Korea	$3,000	
27	Turkey	$3,000	
28	Belgium	$3,000	
29	China	$3,000	
30	Australia	$3,000	
31	Israel	$3,000	
32	Slovak Republic	$3,000	
33	Mexico	$3,000	
34	Venezuela	$3,000	
35	Taiwan	$3,000	
36	South Africa	$3,000	
37	Iceland	$3,000	
38	Uruguay	$3,000	

Final Standings

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Carlos Eduardo Romão	$35,000	32
2	Mark Ziegner	$23,000	24
3	Diego Ostrovich	$15,000	16
4	David Humpherys	$13,000	16
5	Sim Han How	$9,500	12
6	John Larkin	$8,500	12
7	Tuomas Kotiranta	$7,500	12
8	Ken Krouner	$6,500	12
9	Amiel Tenenbaum	$6,000	8
10	Jeroen Remie	$5,500	8
11	Brian Kibler	$5,000	8
12	Zvi Mowshowitz	$4,500	8
13	Matias Gabrenja	$4,100	8
14	Tom van de Logt	$3,800	8
15	Leonardo Uzcategui	$3,500	8
16	Raphael Levy	$3,250	6
17	Cole Swannack	$3,000	7
18	Anton Jonsson	$2,750	7
19	Matthew Rubin	$2,550	7
20	Joseph Gary Wise	$2,400	7
21	Jonas Cleeman	$2,250	7
22	Tomas Tomecek	$2,100	7
23	Ming Huang Chai	$2,000	7
24	Brian Davis	$1,900	7
25	Edward Ross	$1,800	6
26	Pierre Malherbaud	$1,700	6
27	Steven OMS	$1,600	6
28	Antoine Ruel	$1,500	6
29	Christophe Haim	$1,400	6
30	Michael Pustilnik	$1,350	6
31	Kamiel Cornelissen	$1,300	6
32	Rodrig Sanchez Albert	$1,250	6
33	Robert Dougherty	$1,200	5
34	Gabriel Caligaris	$1,150	5
35	Victor van den Broek	$1,100	5
36	Jin Okamoto	$1,050	5
37	Scott Richards	$1,000	5
38	Brian Hegstad	$950	5
39	Albertus Hui Chin Law	$900	5
40	Oliver Schneider	$875	5
41	Franck Canu	$850	5
42	Alexander Witt	$825	5
43	Tsuyoshi Ikeda	$800	5
44	Tomi Walamies	$775	5
45	Kai Budde	$750	5
46	Michael Mayer	$730	5
47	Dario Minieri	$710	5
48	Gary Campbell	$690	5
49	Gerard Fabiano	$675	4
50	Antonino De Rosa	$660	4
51	Jesse Cornelissen	$645	4
52	Jose Barbero	$630	4
53	John Ormerod	$615	4
54	Itaru Ishida	$600	4
55	Rory Draxler	$590	4
56	Vladimir Komanicky	$580	4
57	Thomas Guevin	$570	4
58	Daniel Clegg	$560	4
59	Katsuhiro Mori	$550	4
60	Kazuhiko Mitsuya	$540	4
61	Tiago Chan	$530	4
62	Rob Nadebaum	$520	4
63	Ben Stark	$510	4
64	Juan Reutter	$500	4
65	Xiao Wang		3
66	Eric Franz		3
67	Stefano Fiore		3
68	William Jensen		3
69	David Kearney		3
70	James White		3
71	Alex Shvartsman		3
72	Allan Christensen		3
73	Jelger Wiegersma		3
74	Yuuki Murakami		3
75	Øyvind Ødegaard		3
76	Jason Neale		3
77	Andrew Stokinger		3
78	Ji-Hoon Kim		3
79	Jason Schickli		3
80	Victor Galimbertti		3
81	Yujian Zhou		3
82	David Grant		3
83	Sutt Udomrattanamanee		3
84	Florent Lefranc		3
85	Christoph Lippert		3
86	Joe Soh		3
87	Svend Geertsen		3
88	Jon Stern		3
89	Patrick Mello		3
90	Bjørn Jocumsen		3
91	Eugene Harvey		3
92	Mattias Wåglin		3
93	Darwin Kastle		3
94	Sol Malka		3
95	Uri Peleg		3
96	Felix Schneiders		3
97	Kentarou Yuasa		3
98	Tzu-Ching Kuo		3
99	Jon Finkel		3
100	Andres P Hojmaun Cruz		3
101	Frank Karsten		3
102	Arvi Limpadanai		3
103	Kuniyoshi Ishii		3
104	Jens Thoren		3
105	Sam Gomersall		3
106	Noah Boeken		3
107	Mattias Kettil		3
108	Sylvain Lauriol		3
109	Peter Szigeti		3
110	Dimitrios Chatsios		3
111	Jan Tomcani		3
112	Alexandre Darras		3
113	Ben Rubin		3
114	Alex Melnikow		3
115	Alex Smith		3
116	Robert McKeon		3
117	Mongkol Tachasukjai		3
118	Lev Ankudinov		3
119	Justin Gary		3
120	Siyar Erzen		3
121	Dong Zhong		3
122	Andrey Rybalchenko		3
123	Thomas Johansen		3
124	Raphaël Gennari		3
125	Pedro Motta		3
126	Olivier Ruel		3
127	Jan Doise		3
128	Sang-Ryeol Lee		3
129	Simone Rossi		2
130	Daniel Clifton		2
131	Gergely Gardos		2
132	Peter Laier		2
133	Juraj Smrek		2
134	Philip Reich		2
135	Rafael Le Saux		2
136	Andrew Wolf		2
137	Danny Mandel		2
138	Chris Benafel		2
139	Kenny Hsiung		2
140	Bob Maher Jr.		2
141	Gary Talim		2
142	Roland Bode		2
143	Weng Kwong Au Yeong		2
144	Roberto Maestro		2
145	Christiaan du Plessis		2
146	Alejandro Betschart		2
147	Julian Brown-Santirso		2
148	Edward Fear		2
149	Dante Rosati		2
150	Andras Balogh		2
151	Jeff Cunningham		2
152	Cormac Smyth		2
153	Gabriel Michelena		2
154	Abraham Snepvangers		2
155	Michael Turian		2
156	Chang Ming Tung		2
157	Libor Marek		2
158	Gerald Camangon		2
159	Kai Cheong Tang		2
160	Wei Ren Khoo		2
161	Michihisa Onoda		2
162	Wilfried Ranque		2
163	Joaquin Gasa		2
164	Justin West		2
165	Sang-oh Yoo		2
166	Arnost Zidek		2
167	Peter Guevin		2
168	Tom Harle		2
169	Petri Nuutinen		2
170	Andrew Ranks		2
171	Ivan Cortes		2
172	Robert Ulfarsson		2
173	Romario Britto		2
174	Douglas Penman		2
175	Chen Yu Weng		2
176	Louis Boileau		2
177	Tsuyoshi Fujita		2
178	Gabriel Nassif		2
179	David Jensen		2
180	Chun Hung Wong		2
181	Peter Gysemans		2
182	Tomas Krejsa		2
183	Guillermo Gruszka		2
184	Gabor Papp		2
185	Jun Yang Ang		2
186	Yusuf Kemal Vefa		2
187	Alejandro Pérez		2
188	John Wood		2
189	Yoni Iny		2
190	Jordan Gallant		2
191	Kotarou Ootsuka		2
192	Diego Medina		2
193	Endre H Skjetne		2
194	Horst Winkelmann		2
195	Israe Rosales-Jimenez		2
196	Enric Rodamilans		2
197	Halldór S Kjartansson		2
198	Arjan van Leeuwen		2
199	Eray Veral		2
200	Veera Sirilertvorakul		2
201	Geoffrey Siron		2
202	Zev Gurwitz		2
203	Boris Zlotoiabko		2
204	Yuusuke Sasaki		2
205	Andres Ortega Montero		2
206	Jeff Fung		2
207	Kwan Ching Yuen		2
208	Nicolai Herzog		2
209	David Price		2
210	Jorge Avendaño		2
211	Tibor Nemeth		2
212	Frederico Bastos		2
213	Wang Jialuo		2
214	Chin Wang Leung		2
215	Kevin O'Connor		2
216	Mark Herrin		2
217	Fabrice Encelle		2
218	Anthony Gysberts		2
219	Dirk Roth		2
220	Kelvin Yew Teck Hoon		2
221	Masahiko Morita		2
222	Matt Linde		2
223	Juan Fr Chávez Licona		2
224	Terry Lau		2
225	Gunnar Jóhannsson		2
226	Kyoung-Soo Kim		2
227	Eric Froehlich		2
228	Alex Borteh		2
229	Craig Wescoe		2
230	Mng Yi (Miller) Tsai		2
231	Lourens Scholtz		2
232	Christian Kreher		2
233	Francisco Cereceda		2
234	Eviatar Olpiner		2
235	Thai Minh-dot		2
236	Rogerio Moya		2
237	Michael Doecke		2
238	Josh Napper		2
239	Rodrigo Possamai		2
240	Neil Reeves		2
241	Roger Sorino		2
242	Gidi Aviram		2
243	Brock Parker		2
244	Eivind Nitter		2

Rookie of the Year Race

2002 Final Standings

Rank	Name	Home Country	Points
1	Farid Meraghni	France	42
2	Amiel Tenenbaum		
3	Osyp Lebedowicz	United States	26
4	Christophe Haim		23
5	Arjan van Leeuwen	Netherlands	22
6			21
7	Shuuhei Nakamura	Japan	19
8	Louis Boileau		
9	Matias Gabrenja	Argentina	16
9	Takayuki Nagaoka		
11	Benjamin Caumes	France	15
11	Dario Minieri		
11	Gary Talim	United States	15
11	Gabriel Caligaris		
14	Sim Han How	Malaysia	14
14	Tuomas Kotiranta		
17	Giulio Barra	Italy	13
17	Reinhard Blech		
19	Gionata Dal Farra	Italy	12
19	David Kuykendall		
19	Benjamin Niedrig	Switzerland	12
19	Geoffrey Siron		
19	Pang Ming Wee	Malaysia	12
19	Nikolaj Wolkoff	Denmark	
25	Chua Chang	Singapore	10
25	Adam Lane	United States	
25	Bryan Lyons	United States	10
25	Joshua Smith	United States	
25	Cole Swannack	New Zealand	10
30	Kazuaki Arahori	Japan	9
30	Leopoldo M. M. Neto	Brazil	9
30	Stephan Meyer	Germany	9
30	Kazuhiko Mitsuya	Japan	
30	Yuuki Murakami	Japan	
35	Eric Franz	United States	8
35	Sam Gomersall	England	8
35	Kyle Hadfield	United States	8
35	Svante Landgraf	Sweden	8
35	Josh Ravitz	United States	8
35	David Rood	Canada	8
35	Veerapat Siriertvorasil	Thailand	8
35	Kentarou Yuasa	Japan	8

Player of the Year Race

2002 Final Standings

Rank	Name	Home Country	Points
1	Kai Hudde	Germany	117
2			
3	Alex Shvartsman	United States	62
4			
5	David Humphreys	United States	52
6			
7	Brian Davis	United States	48
8			
9	Eric Froehlich	United States	46
9			
9	Jelger Wiegersma	Netherlands	46
12			
12	Anton Jonsson	Sweden	45
14			
14	Tomi Walamies	Finland	43
16			
17	Abraham Snepvangers	Netherlands	41
18			
19	Marco Blume	Germany	39
19			
19	Zvi Mowshowitz	United States	39
22			
22	Amiel Tenenbaum	France	38
24			
24	Raphael Levy	France	37
24			
24	Carlos Eduardo Romão	Brazil	37
28			
24	Antoine Ruel	France	37
30	Franck Canu		
30	Brian Hegstad	United States	36
30	William Jensen	United States	
33	Itaru Ishida	Japan	35
34			
35	Justin Gary	United States	33
35			
36	Tom van de Lest	Netherlands	32
36			
39	Tsuyoshi Fujita	Japan	31
39	Darwin Mess	United State	
41	Chris Benafel	United States	30
41	Daniel Clegg	United States	
41	Jeff Cunningham	Canada	30
41			
41	Gary Wise	England	30
45			
45	Michael Turian	United States	29
47			
48	Gary Rush	United States	28
49			
50	Jeff Fung	Canada	27
50		Norway	27
50	Jin Okamoto	Japan	27
50		United States	27

Tournament Manager	Head Judge	Scorekeeper	Judge Certification
Jeff Donais (4)	Colin Jackson (4)	Gordon Culp	Mark Brown (1)

Judges

Gis Hoogendijk (4)	David Sevilla (3)	Brenton Cumberpatch (2)
Jakub Wysoczanski (4)	Ingo Muhs (3)	Bruno Barracosa (2)
Mark Rosewater (4)	James Do Hung Lee (3)	Damien Guillemard (2)
Mike Donais (4)	John Shannon (3)	Dan Gow (2)
Adrian Teh (3)	Justus Ronnau (3)	David Gallien (2)
Akio Sugaya (3)	Lutz Hofmann (3)	Enrico Boccabianca (2)
Bernd Keller (3)	Marc Hernandez (3)	Mickael Bouet (2)
Chris Williams (3)	Michael Mason (3)	Misha Zagorski (2)
Colin Smith (3)	Paul Barclay (3)	Yoshiya Shindo (2)
	Wearn Chong (3)	

FIRST PICKS

In each issue of Sideboard Magazine, *we open up a booster and have two top players explain what card they would take as a first pick, and why. In this installment, Pro Tour winner Gary Wise and Pro Tour–San Diego quarterfinalist Eric Froehlich analyze an* Onslaught *pack that contains several good cards and two top picks, Barkhide Mauler and Solar Blast.*

Doomed Necromancer
Creature — Cleric Mercenary
, , Sacrifice Doomed Necromancer: Return target creature card from your graveyard to play.
"His sacrifice shall not be forgotten. Now toss his body over there with the others."
—Phage the Untouchable
Illus. Mark Brill
2/2

Each player may reveal any number of creature cards from his or her hand. Then each player puts a 2/2 green Bear creature token into play for each card he or she revealed this way.
As Krosa unleashed the peace in Kamahl, he unleashed the fury in Krosa

Pinpoint Avalanche deals 4 damage to target creature. The damage can't be prevented.
"Some solve problems by thinking and talking. Others use rocks."
—Taggo, goblin weaponsmith

: Prevent the next 1 damage that would be dealt to target creature or player this turn.
Morph (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)

Target creature can't be the target of spells or abilities this turn.
Cycling (, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
"Next time, don't bother."

Swat
Instant
Destroy target creature with power 2 or less.
Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
Few who cross Phage have the chance to repeat the mistake

Barkhide Mauler
Creature — Beast
Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
Anywhere else they would be hunted for their skins, but in Wirewood, they are safe
4/4

Gary Wise's Pick

With new Draft environments come confusing times. We often wrongly judge the new cards by previous standards, inadvertently asking ourselves questions like, "How would this *Onslaught* common perform in *Odyssey* block?" This subconscious translation of an honest evaluation of a card's power level causes many problems. As a result, before the lengthy process of trial and error really teaches us a new set's idiosyncrasies, mistakes will be made. For an example of this, see the next page.

Oh sure, Eric Froehlich knows his draft. His Top 8 performance at Pro Tour–San Diego and consistently strong finishes show us that. Often, players with his caliber of draft instinct are convinced that their intuitive first pick is the correct one, to the point where a second option isn't even considered. Don't get me wrong, Solar Blast is a powerful card, but there are definitely other choices here, especially in light of the other options placed before us.

The contents of the pack also present reasons not to pounce on Solar Blast. We must consider the other cards, as well as the overall makeup of *Onslaught*, before picking the Blast. *Onslaught* is rife with more bomb creatures than any previous set I can remember, and 3 damage for 3 won't cut it against most of them. While lacking Solar Blast's versatility, Pinpoint Avalanche will be able to take out many of *Onslaught*'s larger creatures, and while that isn't to say it's the better card, the strength of the 3 instant creates a red logjam here. In short, if the player behind you picks the Avalanche after you take Solar Blast, your red is going to dry up in the second pack, leaving you with two-thirds of a draft from which to build your deck. If, however, you choose another card and leave the two red spells for your two neighbors to fight over, you should have a clear path to the cards you need as they pass your way. Combine that with a clunky cycling ability which relegates Solar Blast to the level of mediocrity as far as splash cards go, and you have a series of options that need to be explored before putting your first card into that pile.

For my money, the card to take here is Barkhide Mauler. This is a card with no downside: a big, mean monster with a user-friendly mana cost and the easiest cycling cost this side of Urza block. While Solar Blast has a bigger upside, Eric's contention that Limited is not about the creatures, critters, animals, dudes, and dorks neglects to note that, without them, you aren't winning a single game. The Mauler is not only a powerful creature, but also a very safe pick, one that can make your deck even if you eventually choose to not play forests. In the worst-case scenario, it can cycle you closer to the bombs you're sure to pick up in triple-*Onslaught* Draft.

Fortunately, that's an unlikely scenario, and it's far more probable that you'll be able to take advantage of the Mauler by splashing one or two forests in a non-green deck and just cycling the Beast when you can't find the correct mana. Of course, even that scenario is grim compared to the strategy of continuing to draft big green monsters, running many forests in your main deck, and forcing your opponent to deal with your 4/4, be it on turn four, turn five, or later in the game.

Eric mentioned the Mauler in his analysis. But he didn't pay heed to Nantuko Husk, a 2/2 for 2 which eats your creatures for +2/+2, precisely what the third-pick-worthy Phyrexian Ghoul was doing in Urza block. He gave no respect to Swat, a superb instant that can cycle or kill face-down morph creatures and annoying utility creatures for 1 , and the mention he did give to Doomed Necromancer deemed it mediocre in a format with more huge creatures worth reanimating than any I can recall. Even the blue Mistform Dreamer, a solid 2/1 flyer for 2 , which has an additional ability that will be as important as color switching was in *Invasion* block, merits some degree of consideration.

In the end, though, it comes down to Solar Blast, Pinpoint Avalanche, and Barkhide Mauler. The existence of Sparksmith, the set's best common, means you'll be seeing more red mages than Eric's appraisal accounts for. That, combined with the fact that you get better cards by cooperating with your neighbors than you do by fighting for colors, suggests that avoiding conflict is the best policy. This is best accomplished by passing red. Taking a card that will always be able to fit in your deck regardless of your colors provides another safety net. All this adds up to you taking the Mauler. Happy attacking.

Eric Froehlich's Pick

You may choose not to untap Ghosthelm Courier during your untap step.
2, : As long as Ghosthelm Courier remains tapped, target Wizard gets +2/+2 and can't be the target of spells or abilities.

Festering Goblin
Creature — Zombie Goblin
When Festering Goblin is put into a graveyard from play, target creature gets -1/-1 until end of turn.
In life, it was a fetid, disease-ridden thing. In death, not much changed.
1/1

Wirewood Elf
Creature — Elf
: Add to your mana pool.
"The land belongs to nature as far as our eyes can see. The higher we climb, the more we can see."
1/2

Flying
1: Mistform Dreamer's type becomes the creature type of your choice until end of turn.
Devotion, the second myth of reality. The faithful are most hurt by the objects of their faith.
2/1

Solar Blast deals 3 damage to target creature or player.
Cycling 1 (1, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
When you cycle Solar Blast, you may have it deal 1 damage to target creature or player.

Nantuko Husk
Creature — Zombie Insect
Sacrifice a creature: Nantuko Husk gets +2/+2 until end of turn.
The soul sheds light, and death is its shadow. When the light dims, life and death embrace.
Nantuko teaching
2/2

Draft has never been, and likely will never be, a format of creatures. That's not to say that creatures aren't what will eventually kill your opponent, but the creatures that get the job done are rarely of great importance. While absolute bomb creatures, such as Juzám Djinn's father—Grinning Demon—or Exalted Angel, can dominate a game, a deck filled with efficient removal and mediocre Grey Ogres and Hill Giants will still march to victory.

Whenever I open a pack, I go to the back to thumb through the uncommons and rares, hoping to crack a true game-breaker. Unfortunately, we don't have anything of great interest in those slots—Doomed Necromancer is a Grey Ogre with an ability that rarely has merits; Kamahl's Summons has virtually no application in Limited play; Ghosthelm Courier can shine in a Wizard deck, but will often be a three-mana 2/1 with the ability to make itself large for a hefty mana investment; and Thunder of Hooves is almost always worthless. Yet two solid, if not spectacular, cards shine in the common slots of the pack.

Barkhide Mauler is a large, adequately priced creature, while Solar Blast is a solid, instant removal spell that can also target your opponent. Both cards also feature an interesting mechanic, cycling, which was introduced in Urza block. For a mana cost, either card can be discarded from its owner's hand in order to draw a new, hopefully more useful card. While Urza block only had cards with a cycling cost of 2, *Onslaught* furthers the mechanic by varying the cost (often including colored mana), and as is the case with several cards, an additional effect is generated through cycling.

For only four mana, only one of which is color-specific, Solar Blast deals 3 damage to any target. An efficient removal spell without heavy color requirements, Solar Blast is a great first pick for its versatility and ability to be splashed into any deck. But the benefits don't end there. Cycling Solar Blast allows a player to deal 1 damage to any target while drawing a card. This, in turn, allows Solar Blast to resemble the split cards of *Invasion* block, such as Fire/Ice or Wax/Wane, allowing a player to choose from multiple functions when playing it.

For 3 , Solar Blast is a slightly weaker version of Lightning Blast, a solid first pick from *Seventh Edition* draft that is widely considered to be the best red common in that set. On top of that, for 1 , it's a slightly weaker version of Zap, a solid card from *Invasion*. The versatility provided in this card, allowing a player to either do a large amount of damage to a bigger creature or an opponent with a low life total or finish off or kill a creature while drawing a card, makes Solar Blast a true bomb.

A case can certainly be made that the Barkhide Mauler is the right pick. While it may not be the stronger card in terms of raw power, it is a 4/4 body for only five mana, and it can easily be splashed into any deck needing a large body. Its potential to be splashed may be even greater than that of the Solar Blast because it requires only colorless mana to be played. Barkhide Mauler is also, quite clearly, a green card. Many would assume this to be a great advantage, as green is widely considered to be the best color in *Onslaught*, while red is simply mediocre. While this is true, taking a card from the best color in the set will lead to a smaller selection of cards in the end because everyone else will be looking to go green. Drafting the red card gives you the chance to get into an under-drafted color; in the end, players drafting the under-drafted, weaker color will usually wind up with better decks than players going into an over-drafted, yet more powerful color. If four or five players are drafting green at a table, being one of two red drafters will allow you to stock up on all the high quality red cards while the rest of the table fights for green scraps.

In the end, however, the Mauler is just another creature waiting to be destroyed. A deck with cheap creatures and solid removal spells, such as Solar Blast, will overwhelm a deck full of larger creatures, with the Blasts eventually being aimed directly at the opponent's head to finish him or her off. In a world full of creatures, critters, animals, dudes, dorks, and the like, Solar Blast trumps them all.

Nantuko Husk
Creature — Zombie Insect
Sacrifice a creature: Nantuko Husk gets +2/+2 until end of turn.
The soul sheds light, and death is its shadow. When the light dims, life and death embrace.

Sideboard Team Challenge

RIW Hobbies Takes Top Prize

"Miracle Gro" Wins in Multiple Formats

by Mike Donais

This year marked the final *Sideboard* Team Challenge--one last chance for a team of **Magic** players to prove their dominance in a battle that spans across four different formats. It was originally created as a nonsanctioned tournament so that people could play against Wizards of the Coast employees, and Wizards of the Coast employees could play against the people. This worked out well for many years. Wizards of the Coast often showed up with two or more teams to compete with. A few things changed recently, making it harder to form Wizards of the Coast teams that could play in the event. Since this was the last *Sideboard* Team Challenge, the winner this year is destined to be the all-time champion of the format. As it turned out, there were no Wizards teams this year, but there were a lot of great teams at the event.

To play, you needed a team of four players. The four formats were Extended, Standard, *Odyssey* Block Constructed, and of course, Type 1. As always, people were excited to see what new broken decks would be played in Type 1. Moxes, restricted cards, and dual lands were all over the place. I was happy and surprised to see that all of the Type 1 decks that I saw still had plenty of expensive cards in them. This was also the last chance for most Extended players to play their dual lands before they rotated out of the format. The Block Constructed and Standard decks would give us a good indication of what people were working on for the World Championships, which would take place one week after **Gen Con**. The prizes were a little different than your average tournament because they included a *Sideboard* t-shirt for every participant and *Sideboard* deck boxes, special foil cards, and more for the winners.

Extended had a hot new deck type that included Worldgorger Dragon from *Judgment*. The bad news (and the good news) is that this deck used Animate Dead and Dance of the Dead, so it will be unplayable soon when both of those cards leave Extended. The deck used Entomb to get Worldgorger Dragon into the graveyard on turn one, and then on turn two it would hope to play Animate Dead or Dance of the Dead on the Dragon. When Worldgorger Dragon comes into play, it removes all of your other permanents from the game. This means that your lands and the Animate Dead all leave play. This kills your Dragon (since he is no longer being animated), and when the Dragon leaves play, your lands come back untapped! Not only that, but the Animate Dead also comes back, letting you animate the Dragon again. This process repeats as many times as you want, and it gives you a chance to tap your lands for mana. Eventually, you end up with infinite mana and play a spell to kill your opponent.

When Research & Development noticed this deck, we were a little worried about the combo being too good, but since it's only legal for a few months in Extended before the Extended rotation, we decided that it would be fine. What surprised me most was seeing people playing the same deck concept in Type 1. It was even faster in Type 1, with potential for a first turn kill. Fortunately, this deck did not turn out to be the best deck in Extended or Type 1. Despite this being the most played deck type, the winning team did not have any Worldgorger Dragons in any of their decks, and the environment was still highly varied.

The winning Type 1 deck, played by none other than Pat Chapin of RIW Hobbies, was a blue-green aggro-control deck with Quirion Dryad, Ophidian, and a lot of Counterspells. Pat was playing Force of Will, Misdirection, Foil, Daze, and Divert. He didn't have four of each, but he had 13 Counterspells total in his deck that cost 1 mana or less. This was great against decks that tried to win with a very early combo, like the Worldgorger Dragon decks. Since the spells in the deck were so cheap, Pat was able to play with only nine lands (plus four Land Grants and lots of artifact mana). Most of his games involved him countering some spells, drawing a

RIW Hobbies
First-Place Constructed Decks

Aaron Breider — OBC
- Blue-Green Standstill -

4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Nimble Mongoose
4	Werebear
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Wonder
4	Æther Burst
4	Careful Study
4	Mental Note
2	Roar of the Wurm
4	Standstill
4	Centaur Garden
7	Forest
11	Island

sideboard

2	Bearscape
1	Druid Lyrist
4	Envelop
2	Krosan Beast
4	Krosan Reclamation
2	Upheaval

Mark Herberholz — STANDARD
- Burning Psychotog -

4	Flametongue Kavu
4	Psychotog
4	Nightscape Familiar
2	Burning Wish
2	Circular Logic
3	Counterspell
3	Cunning Wish
4	Fact or Fiction
2	Fire/Ice
4	Memory Lapse
4	Repulse
8	Island
1	Mountain
1	Swamp
3	Salt Marsh
1	Shadowblood Ridge
3	Shivan Reef
2	Sulferous Springs
3	Underground River
2	Urborg Volcano

sideboard

1	Aura Graft
1	Coffin Purge
1	Deep Analysis
1	Divert
1	Gainsay
1	Hibernation
1	Mana Short
1	Opportunity
1	Persecute
1	Pyroclasm
1	Recoil
1	Slay
1	Terminate
1	Upheaval
1	Void

Brad Shugg — EXTENDED
- Miracle Gro -

2	Merfolk Looter
4	Quirion Dryad
2	Waterfront Bouncer
4	Werebear
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Brainstorm
4	Daze
2	Foil
4	Force of Will
4	Gush
4	Land Grant
1	Opt
4	Sleight of Hand
2	Thwart
4	Winter Orb
7	Island
4	Tropical Island

sideboard

1	Back to Basics
3	Divert
2	Elvish Lyrist
1	Emerald Charm
1	Hidden Gibbons
1	Rushing River
1	Seedtime
2	Teferi's Response
2	Treetop Village
1	Waterfront Bouncer

SideBoard team challenge

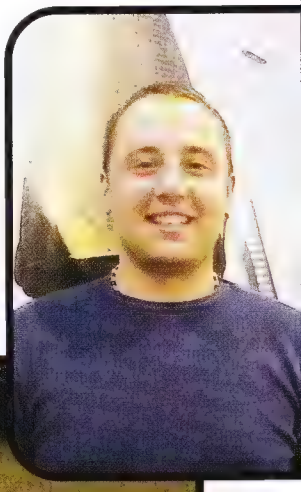
lot of cards, and eventually killing his opponent with a 10/10 Dryad. The deck seemed consistent, and although it did lose sometimes, his team was always able to pull out the wins when he needed the help.

Speaking of which, Brad Shugg of RIW Hobbies, who had not played in a tournament for three years before this one, had a great day with his Extended deck. He won every one of his matches throughout the Swiss and the Top 8 with his blue-green beatdown deck. He had the ever-present Wild Mongrels and Quirion Dryads, but he also surprised people with his Waterfront Bouncers, which were great with his Winter Orbs. This version seems more consistent than the Quirion Dryad decks that I have seen in the past because it includes a few more really strong, cheap creatures, giving it plenty of game even if it doesn't get a Quirion Dryad or the Dryad is killed. Of course, with an undefeated record, the deck speaks for itself.

Mark Herberholz piloted a Psychatog deck in Standard. At the tournament, people were still unsure what colors Psychatog should include. Some liked straight blue-black, some splashed green for Pernicious Deed, and some splashed red for Flametongue Kavu and Burning Wish. I personally like the red version best because it deals well with other Psychatog decks and it has early answers to decks that normally give it trouble. Mark chose to run both Cunning Wish and Burning Wish, which means that his sideboard was packed full of cards to Wish for. Unfortunately, this had the side effect of giving him very little room in the sideboard for cards to actually sideboard in to help him win his tough matchups. Incidentally, a deck very similar to this one would go on to win the Worlds Championships the week after this tournament.

Finally, the team's *Odyssey* Block Constructed (OBC) deck was played by Aaron Breider. His deck was a fairly standard blue-green build compared to other blue-green decks that were popular in the format. It includes four Standstills, though, which give it card advantage over many of the other decks in this format since it is so fast. From *Judgment*, Aaron included four copies of Mental Note to help him get threshold and to put Roar of the Wurm and Wonder in his graveyard. He also played four copies of Wonder, which looks like it will be an environment-defining card in OBC. If one player's creatures all fly and the other player's creatures don't, it seems clear who will win. Against the monoblack deck, which is the other popular deck in OBC, Aaron not only had the Standstills, which were great, but he also had a lot of sideboard cards that work well against slow black control. Envelop, Bearscape, and Upheaval are all great against black because it is slow to get going, relies on sorceries, and uses Haunting Echoes to win. Bearscape is excellent against all the black creature removal cards and against Haunting Echoes.

Next year, instead of having a *Sideboard* Team Challenge, I am hoping to see a big Type 1 tournament. The details are still being worked out, but it will be an opportunity for everyone to play whatever cards they own and compete for some cool prizes.



TYPE 1

Pat Chapin

- Miracle Gro -

4	Ophidian
4	Quirion Dryad
1	Ancestral Recall
1	Black Lotus
4	Brainstorm
1	Cunning Wish
2	Daze
1	Disrupt
1	Divert
2	Foil
4	Force of Will
4	Gush
4	Land Grant
2	Merchant Scroll
4	Misdirection
1	Mox Emerald
1	Mox Pearl
1	Mox Ruby
1	Mox Sapphire
1	Opt
1	Regrowth
4	Sleight of Hand
1	Sol Ring
1	Time Walk
4	Island
1	Library of Alexandria
4	Tropical Island

sideboard

1	Back to Basics
1	Blue Elemental Blast
1	Divert
1	Emerald Charm
1	Fact or Fiction
1	Hydroblast
1	Living Wish
1	Mana Drain
1	Morphling
1	Mystical Tutor
1	Nostalgic Dreams
1	Strip Mine
1	Stroke of Genius
1	Teferi's Response
1	Time Twister

Kai Dominates

A Look Back at the 2001–2002 Season

by Gary Wise

As we look back over each Pro Tour season, there are names and accomplishments that linger in our memories. Mike Loconto winning the first Pro Tour–New York, Dave Price attacking with Jackal Pup in the final of the third Pro Tour–Los Angeles, Jon Finkel besting close friend Bob Maher in the mirror match final of Worlds 2000 . . . these are the moments that define the years, and in doing so, they shape the lasting impression the game leaves on us.

The 2001–2002 season, like those that came before it, contained many of those events that add to the game's legacy. Names like Eivind, Kai, and Cole went to places like Nice, Osaka, and Sydney, leaving us with the connection between those locales and the heroes who shone in each of them. With the completion of World Championships, and with it another instalment of the Pro Tour calendar, now is the time to look back, reminisce, and appreciate the history we've been lucky enough to be witness to.

The Pro Tour returned to the world famous Madison Square Garden.

Any look back at the 2001–2002 season must begin and end with Kai Budde. Stronger than any archetype, more powerful than any one card, Kai took **Magic** to another level this year, forever erasing the questions asked by doubters about whether the game was one of luck or skill. Kai won, then won again, and then again, following up his 2000–2001 Player of the Year campaign with a repeat performance. He became the first player in the game's history to approach the threshold of 100 Pro Points in a calendar year, and then went on to surpass it by an entire Pro Tour win. Kai started the year in style, joining Marco Blume and Dirk Baberowski in forming Phoenix Foundation, a team that was created for one purpose: to win Pro Tour–New York. The Germans did just that, storming through the Swiss rounds and then the final with a nonchalant attitude that suggested there was never a doubt that they would take the whole thing. Some laughed at their arrogance, but in the end the detractors were humbled, and then were humbled some more as Phoenix Foundation won the Osaka Masters Series event. Next, Kai showed that he might be the greatest team player of all time, helping Germany win the team competition at Worlds, ending an American reign that many felt had ended regardless of the Worlds result.

Kai's team exploits weren't enough for a man who went through a transformation this year from great player to the best of all time. He went to the Invitational in Cape Town, South Africa and won that, defeating Dan Clegg by the narrowest of margins. Kai Tinkered on turn two, getting Jewelled Bird and the victory in the ante-inclusive five-color format the turn before Clegg was to win by playing Hatred.

AUGUST 13, 2001 — PRO TOUR: SEASON BEGINS
The 2000-2001 Season ended with Tom van de Logt becoming World Champion and Kai Budde becoming Player of the Year for the second time.

SEPTEMBER 1-2, 2001 — GRAND PRIX: LONDON
Kai starts off the season with the Player of the Year lead by winning Grand Prix London. This trend would continue.

SEPTEMBER 7-9, 2001 — PRO TOUR: NEW YORK
Phoenix Foundation wins to give Kai his 4th Pro Tour win.

OCTOBER 1, 2001 — ODYSSEY: RELEASED
Coming after the release of the extremely powerful *Apocolypse* set, it took a few months to realize *Odyssey*'s potential.

OCTOBER 5-7, 2001 — INVITATIONAL: IN CAPE TOWN
Kai continues his impressive streak to earn the right to create his own card.

NOVEMBER 1-4, 2001 — PRO TOUR: NEW ORLEANS MASTERS
M chael Pustilnik and his three Wild Mongrel deck beat perennial second place finisher Chris Benafel.

NOVEMBER 2-4, 2001 — PRO TOUR: NEW ORLEANS
Kai continues his impressive streak with his fifth Pro Tour win.

Kai won a lot of money last year.

Next was a trip to Louisiana. After Kai's New York win, Randy Buehler was asked what the man who'd now won four Pro Tours needed to do to leapfrog Jon Finkel for the distinction of "best ever", and Randy's answer was simple. "Win New Orleans" was the criteria to meet, and as if Kai had overheard the conversation, he went and did it. Time and again, he made the right play. Time and again, he drew the needed card. The man played his "Trix" deck through the Swiss and then through Darwin Kastle, Dave Humphreys, and Tomi Walamies. It was a tour de force, and through it all, no one could doubt that this was the greatest they'd ever seen the game played.

As great as Kai was through the year, his was not the only story. Tomi Walamies's finals appearance in New Orleans announced the arrival of one of the best new teams to hit the Pro Tour in years: Punisher. Joining Walamies in Top 8 circles were Anton Jonsson and Jens Thorén, both accomplishing the feat in Limited and Constructed events. A year ago, the members of this Swedish-Finnish hybrid were unknown; now they're recognized as some of the best in the world.

While Kai was defeating Thorén in the Player of the Year race by ridiculous margins, one of the most enthusiastic **Magic** players on the globe was establishing himself in the Rookie of the Year race. Farid Meraghni, who played more sanctioned matches in 2001 than any other player in the DCI database, showed that practice pays, defeating Thorén in the finals to win Pro Tour–San Diego. Meraghni skipped Pro Tour–Osaka and Worlds in Sydney, giving birth to a Rookie race that likely should never have happened. Going into the season's final tournament, Amiel Tenenbaum needed to make Top 8 in order to tie his friend and Top 4 to surpass him. When the amiable Frenchman beat Raphael Levy in the final round of the Swiss, he thought the tie was his, but the tiebreaker gods were unkind, leaving him in ninth place, three percentage points from history.

Despite Tenenbaum's disappointment, the Rookie race was indicative of changes brewing in France. Despite placing citizens in assorted Top 8s, France had never taken a major tournament before Farid's win, and the youngster apparently inspired a will to succeed never before explored by his countrymen. Even before San Diego, Tenenbaum was joined by Gabriel Nassif and Nicolas Olivieri in finishing second at Pro Tour–New York, but that was a precursor to the French dominance seen in Osaka. With high Japanese hopes for a return to Top 8 form, the denizens of the host nation could only watch as Frenchmen paraded to the Top 8. When Day 2 was over, four Frenchmen had finished in the Top 8, led by Olivier Ruel. Sporting an Invitational curse that had seen the last three sixteenth place finishers win a Pro Tour the following year, Ruel appeared ready to extend the streak to four, but it was not to be. Leading 2-0 in the final, Olivier could only look on helplessly as San Franciscan Ken Ho staged a comeback to take the title for himself and for his Colony. Ho had joined seven other players in seclusion, barricading themselves in a house to play **Magic** for a month in preparation for the tournament. While few of the others advanced beyond the first day, Ho carried the torch, and when all was said and done, his was the only one still burning.

JANUARY 10-13, 2002
PRO TOUR SAN DIEGO MASTERS
Psychatog has its breakout tournament. It continues to dominate Standard for the rest of the year.

JANUARY 11-13, 2002
PRO TOUR SAN DIEGO
Farid Meraghni wins, giving France its first Pro Tour champion.

JANUARY 19-20, 2002
GRAND PRIX LISBON
Kai beats longtime friend Patrick Mello in the finals of Lisbon.

FEBRUARY 4, 2002
TORMENT RELEASE
Torment adds powerful madness cards and a whole monoblack deck to Standard.

FEBRUARY 13, 2002
MAGIC COLONY BEGINS
Top North American pros room together in what is dubbed the **Magic** Colony, an experiment in intensive playtesting

MARCH 2-3, 2002
GRAND PRIX ANTWERP
Kai wins his sixth Grand Prix—more than anyone but Alex Shvartsman.

MARCH 15-17, 2002
PRO TOUR OSAKA
Ken Ho of **Magic** Colony wins with blue-green.

was not to be. Kai faced Bram Snepvengers in the quarterfinal, and Bram emerged victorious. Unfortunately, Kai's magic didn't wear off on the quirky Snepvengers, who was dispatched by Norwegian Eivind Nitter, the defending European champion. Cool, laid back, and fun, Nitter is hardly the typical **Magic** player, relying on luck and an uncanny ability to fight his way through the most adverse situations to emerge from the pack. With his $600 shirts and a devil-may-care attitude, Eivind defeated American Gary Talim and hard-luck Dane Svend Geertsen to advance to the finals with a red-green deck in a sea of black.

The end of Nice meant the beginning of Nationals season, and with it the 2001–2002 season's home stretch. Results from assorted National Championships started pouring in: Walamies wins Finland with "Trenches", Jonsson takes Sweden with the same, Budde takes Germany with Psychatog . . . one after another, familiar names were taking championships, but two champions in particular were of note. The first was a twelve year-old kid named Cole Swannack, playing in his first major tournament and taking New Zealand by storm. Swannack would go on to prove his win was no fluke by placing seventeenth at World Championships. The second was Eugene Harvey. A year ago, the mild-mannered New Jersey native shocked the world by making the U.S. national team from the meatgrinders, but through the year he proved that performance was no fluke, and now was his time to shine. Harvey survived "the toughest tournament of the year", braving his way past three 'Tog decks in the Top 8 to take the whole thing. It would be his job to lead America back to the team championship promised land, where they'd been so many times before.

With all of France's dominance, it was only fitting that the second to last Pro Tour of the season took place there, not to mention the end of professional **Magic**'s greatest accomplishment to date. With Kai's "Sunday streak" of fourteen wins still intact heading into the tournament, he made his sixth Top 8 appearance, but this time it

With all of the Nationals done, there was time for one last tourney before Worlds. European Championships, the last surviving

MARCH 14-17, 2002
PRO TOUR OSAKA MASTERS
Phoenix Foundation beats two-time Masters finalist Panzer Hunters in the finals.

MAY 3-5, 2002
PRO TOUR NICE
2001 European Champ Eivind Nitter wins. Kai loses first Top 8 match ever.

MAY 10-12, 2002
NATIONALS GERMAN NATIONALS
Kai wins German Nationals to get one of the few titles he lacked.

MAY 27, 2002
JUDGMENT RELEASE
The green-white set heralds the return of Erhnam Djinn.

APRIL 13, 2002
REGIONALS U.S. REGIONALS
Record-breaking attendance as Psychatog and Wild Mongrel rule the day.

MAY 2-5, 2002
PRO TOUR NICE MASTERS
Alexander Wtt becomes the first Gateway winner to win a Masters.

MAY 11-12, 2002
NATIONALS NETHERLANDS NATIONALS
Tom van de Logt wins. Noah Boeken and Kamiel Cornelissen round out the team.

MARCH APRIL MAY

tournaments, Brucker, like Meraghni, Ho, and countrymen Baberowski and Blume, would not attend Worlds.

The season's final tournament held the greatest surprises of all. Kai did poorly, Cole did well, and the victor emerged from the least likely place of all. For years, South America had provided the footpads for Pro Tour players—young competitors to be fed on by their more experienced foes. Time and again, South American players made their way to Pro Tours or fought amongst themselves at home, then watched helplessly as Americans and Europeans took the prizes they so desperately longed for. Finally, though, they found the missing piece of the puzzle.

Shedding their nationalistic barriers, the players of Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and Uruguay came together to form Team Bandana to work towards Worlds. They tested and tested hard, working on three formats for two months straight. They learned the environments, learned the best deck—Burning Wish–Psychatog—and learned how to play it in the mirror matches that would dominate the tournament's landscape, and it paid off.

Carlos Romão, standing larger than life, was left standing last, over Kai, over Jens, over Anton and Eivind and all the rest. Carlos played 21 rounds of **Magic** and left with the greatest prize of all. He defeated Mark Zeigner 3-2, a bittersweet defeat for the German, who carried Kai to the team win. Never before had a Latin American made the Sunday stage, and never again will the rest of the world assume the best when paired with a player from the Bandana nations.

That, in a nutshell, is the story of 2001–2002. Next year, there will be new legions to write about, talk about, and remember, but for now, those listed above must be celebrated. After all, without them, there is no story. That's what makes them heroes.

continental, did not disappoint, taking place on the World Cup final weekend. While Germany felt the sting of defeat in that event, her players couldn't help but be pleased with that Sunday as David Brucker, playing Psychatog, hacked through a star-studded field to take the title. Never one to travel outside Europe for

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2002
SUPER SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP
Edward Solis wins with red-green.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2002
JAPAN NATIONALS
Kazuhiko Mitsuya takes the win with Psychatog.

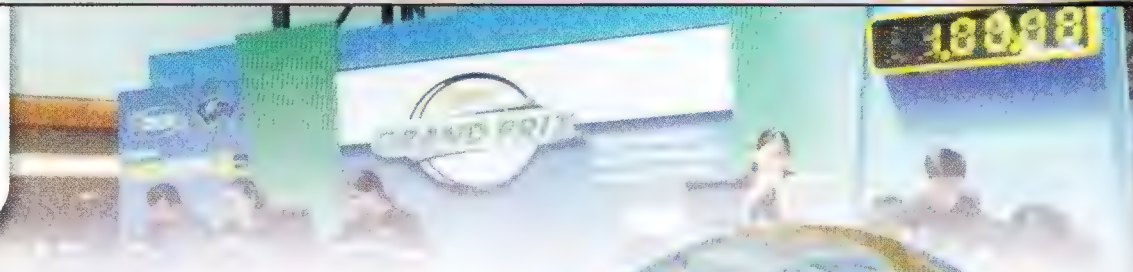
JULY 6, 2002
AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP
Thomas Wood wins with monoblack Control.

AUGUST 18, 2002
ROOKIE OF THE YEAR
San Diego winner Farid Meraghni wins Rookie of the Year just ahead of Amiel Tenenbaum.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2002
U.S. NATIONALS
Eugene Harvey wins with "Squirrel-Opposition" in a Top 8 filled with Psychatog.

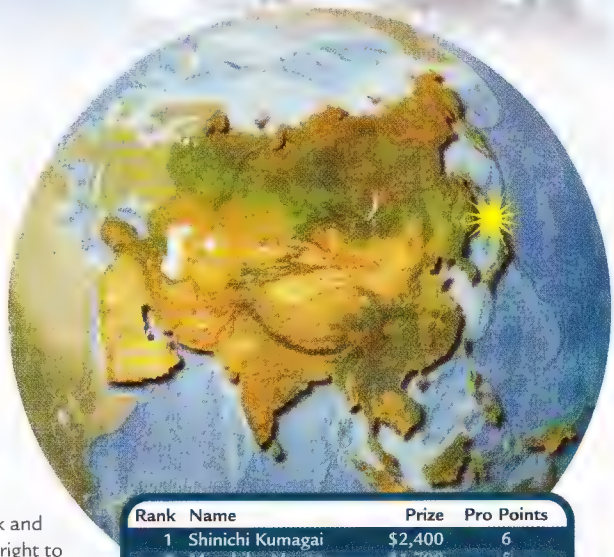
JUNE 28-30, 2002
EURO CHAMPIONSHIPS
David Brucker wins. Pro Tour–Osaka quarterfinalist Christophe Haim finishes second.

AUGUST 14-18 2002
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
Carlos Romão wins. Latin America get its first Top 8 and a World Champion. Kai leads the German national team over a come-from-behind U.S. team.



Grand Prix Sapporo

by Josh Bennett



In the wake of World Championships it had become clear that *Odyssey* Block Constructed had more than two decks in it. Before, it was assumed that there the format was just blue-green and monoblack. Worlds showed that the blue-green deck was, in fact, three decks: madness, threshold, and Quiet Speculation. Close behind were monoblack, Team Punisher's blue-white Speculation, and green-white madness, all of which had 6-0 records at Worlds. It was the dawn of infinite possibilities.

At a Grand Prix falling so soon after Worlds, you'd expect nothing but a sea of the "best decks" copied from Internet reports. This was Japan, though, a pro community notorious for its rogue designs. At Worlds they had debuted "Upheaval-Infestation", putting up under-the-radar numbers like 5-1, 4-2, and 4-1-1. It was anyone's guess what they'd turn up this time.

More than 460 players descended on Sapporo in search of glory, glittering prizes, and an invitation to Pro Tour–Houston. All the big names in Japanese **Magic** were there, despite the plane trip needed to get to the island of Hokkaido. The "Big Six" decks were all there, but unconventional designs seemed to be finding some success, as well. In addition to the Infestation deck, there were Solitary Confinement builds; blue-black Braids, Cabal Minion decks; and even red-green beatdown decks matching stride with the top tables.

Eight rounds served to determine the Top 64 that would do battle on Day 2. Standing atop it all was Masashiro Kuroda of P.S.2 (Grand Prix–Nagoya champions) fame. He and his reworked version of Kai Budde's Speculation deck from World Championships had demolished the competition. Joining him at 8-0 were Osamu Fujita and rookie Kunisato Ebie, both with monoblack control. Kuroda's deck also furthered the success of teammates Masahiko Morita and Nobuaki Shikata, taking them both to 7-1.

The field for Day 2 was half blue-green, split evenly between the three subtypes, with the other proven decks close behind. The remaining rogues—and there were about a dozen of them--certainly had their work cut out for them.

The six Swiss rounds of Day 2 were quick and brutal. From them, eight emerged with the right to fight for the title. Satoshi Nakamura, perhaps the oldest and most public face of Japanese pro **Magic**, appeared playing a madness-Speculation hybrid. Masahiko Morita and Nobuaki Shikata made it on the shoulders of dedicated Speculation. Sadly, Kuroda's Day 2 did not match his Day 1, and he missed the cut. Rounding out the big names was Itaru Ishida, the quiet mastermind of Panzer Hunters. He had come away from Worlds enraptured by Punisher's deck, and had played it expertly this weekend. Joining those stars was up-and-comer Jun'ichi Kinoshita of Osaka, playing blue-green threshold, as well as three amateurs, Kenji Kimoto, Shinichi Kumagai, and Yuta Hirosawa, who played a deck similar to Nakamura's.

Things broke as expected. The pros and amateurs were seeded against one another, and Morita, Ishida, Kumagai, and Nakamura advanced. In the semis, all eyes were on Morita vs. Ishida. The two played a savage back-and-forth, but in the final game a stall favored Morita, who played Upheaval for the win. In the other bracket, Kumagai swept Nakamura, catching the crowd unawares. Suddenly it was the rookie in the finals, and against Morita, "Mr. Second Place" himself! He had shed his curse at Nagoya—surely he couldn't be stopped from following it up with a singles win.

Fenced in by eager spectators, they set about their task. Morita took the first, and Kumagai outraced in the second thanks to a topdecked Circular Logic for Morita's Moment's Peace. Both mulliganed before the deciding game. Morita started on the back foot and was cemented there by Kumagai's Catalyst Stone. Kumagai kept the pressure up, and a second Stone meant Morita would have to tap out to Peace and stay alive. Another attack, and Kumagai became yet another in a long line of amateurs to take top honors at a Japanese Grand Prix. He was speechless as he accepted his trophy.

Shinichi Kumagai
- Odyssey Block, August 2002 -

2	Arrogant Wurm
4	Aquamoeba
4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Wild Mongrel
2	Wonder
4	Æther Burst
4	Circular Logic
1	Deep Analysis
1	Krosan Reclamation
2	Living Wish
3	Quiet Speculation
4	Roar of the Wurm
1	Sylvan Might
11	Forest
12	Island
1	Tarnished Citadel

sideboard

2	Catalyst Stone
3	Envelop
1	Krosan Reclamation
2	Phantom Centaur
2	Ray of Revelation
3	Squirrel Nest
1	Sylvan Safekeeper
1	Wonder

Rank	Name	Prize	Pro Points
1	Shinichi Kumagai	$2,400	6
2	Masahiko Morita	$1,700	5
3	Satoshi Nakamura	$1,200	4
4	Itaru Ishida	$1,000	4
5	Kenji Kimoto	$800	3
6	Junichi Kinoshita	$800	3
7	Yuta Hirosawa	$800	3
8	Nobuaki Shikata	$800	3
9	Masashi Oiso	$500	2
10	Katsuhiro Mori	$500	2
11	Kazuya Terasawa	$500	2
12	Akira Asahara	$500	2
13	Takahiro Fukuchi	$500	2
14	Yuichi Takasaki	$500	2
15	Kenichi Fujita	$500	2
16	Osamu Fujita	$500	2
17	Ryuju Maeno	$250	1
18	Ryota Konagai	$250	1
19	Shu Komuro	$250	1
20	Takeshi Manabe	$250	1
21	Yuu Shinozaki	$250	1
22	Nobuhiro Ando	$250	1
23	Kentaro Yuasa	$250	1
24	Suhan Yun	$250	1
25	Hiroki Hayashi	$250	1
26	Fumiyasu Morikawa	$250	1
27	Ikumi Ebina	$250	1
28	Masashi Minami	$250	1
29	Katsumi Ishibashi	$250	1
30	Masashiro Kuroda	$250	1
31	Akitsugu Ito	$250	1
32	Hideki Kobayashi	$250	1
33	Tomoya Yamano		
34	Kimio Imai		
35	Akihiro Kashima		
36	Shota Yasooka		
37	Kunisato Ebie		
38	Kenshiro Hirakawa		
39	Naoki Kubouchi		
40	Kiyotomo Kageyama		
41	Masayasu Urata		
42	Tomoya Taniguchi		
43	Hideki Komiyama		
44	Kazutaka Onodera		
45	Yuuki Shibata		
46	Yuki Morita		
47	Masaru Mayaguchi		
48	Shinichi Ueno		
49	Wataru Narita		
50	Shinichi Akimoto		
51	Takashi Fujihira		
52	Tomohide Sasagawa		
53	Shota Mizui		
54	Kohei Nakagawa		
55	Tsuyoshi Fujita		
56	Hisanao Tsuji		
57	Arata Fujiya		
58	Hideki Tsujimoto		
59	Yusuke Ito		
60	Masanori Kobayashi		
61	Reiji Ando		
62	Hiromasa Imagawa		
63	Heinrich Tsuchiya		
64	Kenichi Kamifuji		

Events Calendar

October 2002–September 2003

October

October–November **Qualifier Season for PT–Chicago** Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
7 ***Onslaught* Release Date**
12–13 **Grand Prix–Utsunomiya** Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
12–13 **Grand Prix–Copenhagen** Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
26–27 **Grand Prix–Philadelphia** Sealed with Rochester Draft finals

November

2–3 **State/Provincial/Territory/Island Championships** Standard
7–10 **Houston Masters Series** Booster Draft
8–10 **Pro Tour–Houston** Extended
23–24 **Grand Prix–Melbourne** Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
23–24 **Grand Prix–Los Angeles** Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
30–December 1 **Grand Prix–Reims** Extended

December

December–January **Qualifier Season for PT–Venice** Extended

January 2003

4–5 **Grand Prix–New Orleans** Extended
16–19 **Chicago Masters Series** Standard
17–19 **Pro Tour–Chicago** Rochester Draft
25–26 **Grand Prix–Hiroshima** Extended
25–26 ***Legions* Prerelease** Sealed Deck

February

February–April **Qualifier Season for PT–Yokohama** Sealed with Booster Draft finals
3 ***Legions* Release Date**

March

tbd **Grand Prix–Kyoto** Sealed with Booster Draft finals
20–23 **Venice Masters Series** Team Rochester
21–23 **Pro Tour–Venice** Block Constructed
29–30 **Grand Prix–Singapore** Sealed with Booster Draft finals

May

May–July **Qualifier Season for PT–Boston** Team Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
3 **U.S./Canadian Regionals** Standard
8–11 **Yokohama Masters Series** Extended
9–11 **Pro Tour–Yokohama** Booster Draft
17–18 **"Jack" Prerelease** Sealed Deck
26 **"Jack" Release Date**

June

tbd **Grand Prix–Shizuoka** Team Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
tbd **European Championship–United Kingdom** Standard & Rochester Draft
19–22 **Canada National Championship–Montreal** Standard & Rochester Draft
26–29 **Origins International Game Expo & Fair–Columbus**
27–29 **U.S. National Championship–San Diego** Standard & Rochester Draft
28 **Type 1 Championship at Origins** Type 1
28–29 **Junior Super Series Championship–San Diego** Standard

August

tbd **Grand Prix–Niigata** Standard or Block Constructed
August–September **Qualifier Season for PT–New Orleans** Block Constructed
6–10 **World Championships–Berlin** Standard, Booster Draft & Extended

September

12–14 **Pro Tour–Boston** Team Sealed with Rochester Draft finals
27–28 **"Bacon" Prerelease** Sealed Deck

Subject to Change
Events, dates, locations, and formats may change, especially for tournaments farther ahead in the schedule. Check **wizards.com/tournaments** for the most up-to-date event information.

Event Coverage
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A Developer's Look at ONSLAUGHT™

by Mike Donais, Magic R&D

Onslaught is all about creatures. It has more creatures than any set before it, and those creatures are stronger than ever. One of the goals of the set design was to give people many different creature decks to smash with in both Limited and Constructed. I expect to see more creature decks than ever during this block. Of course, whenever an environment is filled with just creature decks, it's easy to build the anti-creature deck that beats them, so you can never have a stable environment with only one type of deck.

Once we determined that *Onslaught* would be all about creatures, there was much debate over how many different creature types we should focus on. The list was pretty long originally, but in the end we kept it focused enough that the creature types we ended up with will appear a lot in Limited, making the "creature type matters" cards interesting. We use the term "creature type matters" to refer to any card that references creature type. A card with "protection from Goblins" or "all Soldiers gain +1/+1" would be a "creature type matters" card. The creature types we decided on in the end are Goblin, Elf, Soldier, Cleric, Beast, Wizard, Zombie, and Bird. We decided that to keep Limited play interesting, almost every common and uncommon creature would have at least one of these creature types. The main exception to this rule was the inclusion of the blue Mistform creatures, which are all Illusions that can change their creature type to any type for 1. This leaves blue in an interesting place in Limited, because if you need more Goblins for your Goblin deck or Elves for your Elf deck, you can add blue and play some Mistform creatures.

The other exception that we made was including the occasional Dragon or Angel at rare. Rare cards have very little effect on Limited play, and Dragons and Angel are a strong part of **Magic**, so we included the normal amount of cards like those.

[Ambush Angel] 5WW
[Ambush Angel]
RW02_N XManny
Creature -- Angel
Ambush o2oWoWoW #(You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for o3. Turn it face up any time for its ambush cost.)#
Flying
Whenever CARDNAME deals damage, you gain that much life
V6.0 ©2000Wotc 4/4

While this creature type discussion was all going on, I was in a meeting with rules manager Paul Barclay, and we were finishing up the rules that clarify how face-down creatures work. (This was important for Camouflage and Illusionary Mask.) As we finished, we realized that our rules for face-down creatures were so good that we could include a mechanic involving them in the next expansion. At that moment, some designers were discussing what mechanic to use in *Onslaught* in the very next room. We brought them the idea of morph, which was then called ambush. The idea was that you could play a morph creature face down as a 1/1 and later turn it face up by paying some amount of mana. After deciding that a 1/1 was not significant enough to matter, we made the creatures 2/2 and decided that we loved the mechanic. It's fun to play and very different from anything we've done before. It also allows some wacky things to go on.

One of the themes that we tied into morph was saboteurs. This is what we called cards that do something bad to you when they damage you in combat. For example, when Headhunter deals combat damage to a player, that player must discard a card from his or her hand. We made a bunch of saboteurs because we wanted people to worry when they were attacked by face-down creatures. Most of the saboteurs are in black and red, so you should block face-down creatures if the opponent is playing black or red. On the other hand, green and white creatures with morph are generally dangerous to block because some of them get very large, and others have first strike, so if your opponent is playing green and white it is best not to block unless he or she has no mana available.

Blue, always the trickster, got some tricky morph cards like Disruptive Pitmage. Disruptive Pitmage can be revealed in response to a spell being played and then tapped to counter the spell unless the opponent pays an additional 1. Watching your opponent's expression when this guy works is the best part.

This set, like most large expansions, went through a lot of changes during design and development. We must have tested a dozen different new mechanics before we finally discovered morph. I would like to elaborate on the others, but I'm hoping that some of them will appear in a few years.

The other big mechanic that we decided on for *Onslaught* is cycling. Cycling was first seen back in *Urza's Saga*, but it was never fully fleshed out. Every cycling card cost 2 to cycle, and while that was great at the time, I feel that there is a lot more design space than that available. *Onslaught* starts to explore the possibilities with different cycling costs. Some cards cost more mana to cycle, and others cost colored mana. More significantly, *Onslaught* has cards that give you some effect when they are cycled. Solar Blast, for example, can be played for 3 to do 3 damage to target creature or player, or it can be cycled for 1 and do 1 damage to target creature or player—and you get to draw the card for cycling it. Keep in mind that cycling a spell for its effect doesn't count as playing it, so it can't be countered. Not bad at all.

Undead Gladiator is another interesting twist on cycling. Not only is he a 3-power creature for 2, but he also lets you effectively cycle any card. Just cycle Undead Gladiator into your graveyard, and then at the beginning of your upkeep you can pay 1 and discard a card to get him back. Repeat this as many times as you like to cycle as many cards as you want. The process is a little slow, but if you're looking for a particular card, the Gladiator may be just what you need. More importantly, if you draw a lot of lands in the late game, you can trade them for this guy so that you can keep playing creatures.

Akroma's Vengeance was the topic of much debate during development. For a long time we were testing it at only 3✱✱. This made it an excellent card in creatureless control decks. One of the decks that it saw a lot of play in was an Anurid

Brushhopper–Genesis deck that also included four copies of Wrath of God. Unfortunately, *Onslaught* is all about creatures, and it seemed like that deck represented a push in the wrong direction. In the end, we decided to add a mana and print Akroma's Vengeance at 4✱✱.

One of my favorite cycles of cards is the race lands: Daru Encampment, Riptide Laboratory, Starlit Sanctum, Seaside Haven, Goblin Burrows, Wirewood Lodge, Unholy Grotto, and Contested Cliffs. As you can see, we made one for each of the eight main races, and in the right deck, every single one of them is good. Yep, even the Bird land, Seaside Haven, is good. Well that is, it would be good if Birds were good.

Which brings me to the Bird deck. One of the goals in developing this set was to build the best deck around each of the main races and test it out. Some of the decks needed help from the next two sets in the block, but in the end every race deck was pretty good. The exception, of course, was the Bird deck, which was by far the hardest of the eight decks to build. I searched through every legal set for cards that referenced Birds. I was surprised to find a bunch of good Bird-helping cards in *Judgment*. *Judgment* included a great flashback card—Battle Screech—that could make four Birds fairly easily on turn four, and it also contained the two Soulcatcher cards. Although the Bird deck was mocked, it managed to beat more people than I expected.

The list I've provided isn't the exact deck—my last iteration had some *Legions* cards in it—but it's pretty close. The biggest problem the deck had was that it needed more Birds that it could play for one mana. I tested Aven Envoy for a while even though it looks bad. It worked out pretty well because of the eight enchantments that pump up creatures and the Seaside Havens. Against one-mana Goblins, any Bird at all is a good turn-one play. The great thing about this deck is that the Soulcatcher's Aeries keep getting bigger as the game goes on. Ideally, you can sacrifice a Bird to your Seaside Haven at the end of your opponent's turn to draw a card and make your Aerie grow and then play Wrath of God on your turn to wipe out everything but your enchantments. This usually gives you card advantage and leaves it so that every Bird you play from then on is huge. If you want to build this deck, remember to keep enough white Birds in it to flash back your Battle Screeches.

There is a cycle of cards in *Onslaught* that we have been testing since we developed *Odyssey*. The "Words" cycle was originally in *Odyssey*, but it was moved to *Torment* because we wanted to make sure to put it at the best power level and then moved again into *Onslaught* so that it could be tested even further. Originally, the Words cost no mana to activate and only two mana to play. We came up with broken combo decks for every single one of them at one point or another. The blue one was much stronger when it could bounce any one of your opponent's permanents. Now it affects both players, costs more, and lets the opponent choose which permanent he or she bounces. I'm pretty sure that these cards are at a safe power level now. At a lower power level, they wouldn't be interesting to test, and at a higher power level the chance of a broken combo deck evolving is too high. Hopefully someone will find a good use for these, as they certainly have potential.

Good luck to you all with whatever creature decks you decide to build. Hopefully, they will beat the Bird deck.

For the Birds

2 Commander Eesha
2 Lieutenant Kirtar
2 Mystic Familiar
4 Skywing Aven
4 Soulcatcher
4 Suntail Hawk
2 Thieving Magpie
4 Battle Screech
4 Shared Triumph
4 Soulcatcher's Aerie
4 Wrath of God
4 Adarkar Wastes
4 Flooded Strand
4 Island
6 Plains
2 Seaside Haven
4 Skycloud Expanse

✦ GREG & TIM HILDEBRANDT

Onslaught Mechanics

Morph is New; Cycling is Back

by Brian Kibler

The two mechanics in* Onslaught *mark a landmark moment in the history of* Magic *set design. While previous releases included mechanics that required players to reevaluate the power of certain cards or to learn how to manage previously unimportant resources like the graveyard,* Onslaught *both introduces a new ability that will complicate creature combat like none before it and marks the return of an old favorite—with a twist.

CYCLING

Players have wondered when new sets would see the reintroduction of old mechanics; that time has finally come. Research & Development can't be charged with running out of ideas, however. Rather than rehashing an old mechanic—in this case, cycling, which originated in *Urza's Saga* and saw high-level tournament play in Block and Standard Constructed—the *Onslaught* design and development teams took the next step.

Cycling in *Onslaught* is more complex than it was in *Urza's Saga,* where everything had a cycling cost of {2}. Not only does cycling have varying costs in *Onslaught,* but there are also cards that produce effects when they are cycled. Solar Blast, for example, can be played for {3}{R} to deal 3 damage to a creature or player, but when it's cycled for {1}{R}{R}, it can deal 1 damage while drawing you a card. Similarly, Death Pulse gives any creature -4/-4 for {2}{B}{B}, or it can be cycled for {1}{B}{B} to give any creature -1/-1. Any of these effects would be playable in Limited on its own, and the additional versatility will make these cards extremely useful (and likely high picks in draft).

Cycling was popular among tournament players because it improved the consistency of decks that used it. In particular, the cycling lands like Blasted Landscape and Remote Isle found their way into a number of decks. These lands—with the exception of the Landscape, which could only produce colorless mana—had the drawback of coming into play tapped but afforded some protection against mana problems. With cycling lands, players could use a higher ratio of land in their decks without having to worry as much about being flooded. In the early game, those extra lands proved crucial, but in the late game, they could be cycled away in the hopes of drawing more spells.

Another bonus of cycling is that it allows for the use of situational cards in the main deck without having dead cards in some matchups. Scrap, a cycling Shatter, was popular in the artifact-heavy Pro Tour–New York. Against decks with powerful artifacts, a maindeck Scrap could mean the difference between a chance at victory and a certain defeat at the hands of Phyrexian Processor–produced Minion tokens. Against other decks, Scrap could be cycled away. With the exit of *Invasion* block's split cards, which have similar versatility, now is the perfect time for the return of cycling. It will be interesting to see how the new cycling cards influence deck design, especially considering the mechanic's favorable interactions with threshold.

MORPH

Longtime **Magic** players often develop a habit of referring to creatures according to their power and toughness for their mana cost, regardless of their actual creature type. The archetypical 2/2 for two mana is Grizzly Bears, so all two-mana 2/2s are called "Bears". The same applies to 3/3s for four (Hill Giants) and 2/2s for three (Gray Ogres). Morph, then, could be named "Gray Ogre World", because that's what it creates. This unusual mechanic allows a creature to be played face down as a 2/2 for {3}. At any time, its controller can pay its morph cost to turn it face up, at which point it acquires whatever abilities it would have if played normally. Unlike most effects in **Magic**, morph does not use the stack. Payment and resolution of the ability are simultaneous, so your opponent cannot Shock your creature in response to its morph cost being paid.

The strategic implications of this ability are manifold. Combat with face down creatures promises to be complicated. If you attack into your opponent's 2/2, will it suddenly turn into a 4/4 and kill your creature? Should you remove that face down creature the turn it's played, or can you risk it turning into an Exalted Dragon, a 4/5 flier with a morph cost of {2}{W}{W}, the next turn? On the flipside, should you play your Exalted Dragon as a 2/2 and expose it to removal, or wait until you can play it for its full mana cost to be sure it stays in play? Like *Invasion* block's kicker creatures, morph creatures redefine the mana curve, making it difficult to draft a deck with a hole in the three slot. All of these considerations will fill *Onslaught* Limited play with complicated decisions—hardly what one might expect from a world of Gray Ogres.

ONSLAUGHT CARD LIST

● : rare ● : uncommon ○ : common

1 ○ Akroma's Blessing 2 ✱
2 ○ Akroma's Vengeance 4 ✱✱
3 ○ Ancestor's Prophet 4 ✱
4 ○ Astral Slide 2 ✱
5 ○ Aura Extraction 1 ✱
6 ○ Aurification 2 ✱✱
7 ○ Aven Brigadier 3 ✱✱✱
8 ○ Aven Soulgazer 3 ✱✱
9 ● Battlefield Medic 1 ✱
10 ○ Catapult Master 3 ✱✱
11 ○ Catapult Squad 1 ✱
12 ○ Chain of Silence 1 ✱
13 ○ Circle of Solace 3 ✱
14 ○ Convalescent Care 1 ✱✱
15 ○ Crowd Favorites 6 ✱
16 ● Crown of Awe 1 ✱
17 ○ Crude Rampart 3 ✱
18 ● Daru Cavalier 3 ✱
19 ● Daru Healer 2 ✱
20 ● Daru Lancer 4 ✱✱
21 ● Daunting Defender 1 ✱
22 ○ Dawning Purist 2 ✱
23 ● Defensive Maneuvers 3 ✱
24 ● Demystify ✱
25 ● Disciple of Grace 1 ✱
26 ● Dive Bomber 3 ✱
27 ○ Doubtless One 3 ✱
28 ○ Exalted Angel 4 ✱✱
29 ● Foothill Guide ✱
30 ○ Glarecaster 1 ✱✱
31 ● Glory Seeker 1 ✱
32 ● Grassland Crusader 5 ✱
33 ● Gravel Slinger 3 ✱
34 ● Gustcloak Harrier 1 ✱✱
35 ● Gustcloak Runner ✱
36 ○ Gustcloak Savior 4 ✱
37 ○ Gustcloak Sentinel 2 ✱✱
38 ○ Gustcloak Skirmisher 3 ✱
39 ○ Harsh Mercy 2 ✱
40 ○ Improvised Armor 3 ✱
41 ○ Inspirit 2 ✱
42 ○ Ironfist Crusher 4 ✱
43 ○ Jareth, Leonine Titan 3 ✱✱✱
44 ○ Mobilization 2 ✱
45 ○ Nova Cleric ✱
46 ○ Oblation 2 ✱
47 ● Pacifism 1 ✱
48 ○ Pearlspear Courier 2 ✱
49 ● Piety Charm ✱
50 ● Renewed Faith 2 ✱
51 ○ Righteous Cause 3 ✱✱
52 ● Sandskin 2 ✱
53 ○ Shared Triumph 1 ✱
54 ○ Shieldmage Elder 5 ✱
55 ○ Sigil of the New Dawn 3 ✱
56 ○ Sunfire Balm 2 ✱
57 ○ True Believer ✱✱
58 ● Unified Strike ✱
59 ○ Weathered Wayfarer ✱
60 ○ Whipcorder ✱✱
61 ○ Words of Worship 2 ✱

62 ● Airborne Aid
63 ● Annex
64 ● Aphetto Alchemist
65 ● Aphetto Grifter
66 ● Arcanis the Omnipotent
67 ● Artificial Evolution
68 ● Ascending Aven
69 ● Aven Fateshaper
70 ● Backslide
71 ● Blatant Thievery
72 ● Callous Oppressor
73 ● Chain of Vapor
74 ● Choking Tethers
75 ● Clone
76 ● Complicate
77 ● Crafty Pathmage
78 ● Crown of Ascension
79 ● Discombobulate
80 ● Dispersing Orb
81 ● Disruptive Pitmage
82 ● Essence Fracture
83 ● Fleeting Aven
84 ● Future Sight
85 ● Ghosthelm Courier
86 ● Graxiplon
87 ● Imagecrafter
88 ● Information Dealer
89 ● Ixidor, Reality Sculptor
90 ● Ixidor's Will
91 ● Mage's Guile
92 ● Meddle
93 ● Mistform Dreamer
94 ● Mistform Mask
95 ● Mistform Mutant
96 ● Mistform Shrieker
97 ● Mistform Skyreaver
98 ● Mistform Stalker
99 ● Mistform Wall
100 ● Nameless One
101 ● Peer Pressure
102 ● Psychic Trance
103 ● Quicksilver Dragon
104 ● Read the Runes
105 ● Reminisce
106 ● Riptide Biologist
107 ● Riptide Chronologist
108 ● Riptide Entrancer
109 ● Riptide Shapeshifter
110 ● Rummaging Wizard
111 ● Sage Aven
112 ● Screaming Seahawk
113 ● Sea's Claim
114 ● Slipstream Eel
115 ● Spy Network
116 ● Standardize
117 ● Supreme Inquisitor
118 ● Trade Secrets
119 ● Trickery Charm
120 ● Voidmage Prodigy
121 ● Wheel and Deal
122 ● Words of Wind

123 ● Accursed Centaur
124 ● Anurid Murkdiver
125 ● Aphetto Dredging
126 ● Aphetto Vulture
127 ● Blackmail
128 ● Boneknitter
129 ● Cabal Archon
130 ● Cabal Executioner
131 ● Cabal Slaver
132 ● Chain of Smog
133 ● Cover of Darkness
134 ○ Crown of Suspicion
135 ● Cruel Revival
136 ● Death Match
137 ● Death Pulse
138 ○ Dirge of Dread
139 ● Disciple of Malice
140 ● Doomed Necromancer
141 ● Ebonblade Reaper
142 ● Endemic Plague
143 ● Entrails Feaster
144 ● Fade from Memory
145 ○ Fallen Cleric
146 ● False Cure
147 ● Feeding Frenzy
148 ○ Festering Goblin
149 ● Frightshroud Courier
150 ● Gangrenous Goliath
151 ● Gluttonous Zombie
152 ● Gravespawn Sovereign
153 ● Grinning Demon
154 ○ Haunted Cadaver
155 ● Head Games
156 ● Headhunter
157 ● Infest
158 ○ Misery Charm
159 ○ Nantuko Husk
160 ● Oversold Cemetery
161 ● Patriarch's Bidding
162 ○ Profane Prayers
163 ● Prowling Pangolin
164 ● Rotlung Reanimator
165 ○ Screeching Buzzard
166 ○ Severed Legion
167 ● Shade's Breath
168 ○ Shepherd of Rot
169 ● Silent Specter
170 ● Smother
171 ● Soulless One
172 ○ Spined Basher
173 ● Strongarm Tactics
174 ○ Swat
175 ● Syphon Mind
176 ○ Syphon Soul
177 ● Thrashing Mudspawn
178 ● Undead Gladiator
179 ● Visara the Dreadful
180 ● Walking Desecration
181 ● Withering Hex
182 ● Words of Waste
183 ○ Wretched Anurid

184 ○ Barkhide Mauler
185 ● Biorhythm
186 ○ Birchbore Rangers
187 ● Bloodline Shaman
188 ○ Broodwarden Nantuko
189 ● Centaur Glade
190 ● Chain of Acid
191 ● Crown of Vigor
192 ● Elven Riders
193 ● Elvish Pathcutter
194 ● Elvish Scrapper
195 ● Elvish Scrapper
196 ○ Elvish Warrior
197 ● Huntress's Presence
198 ● Everglove Courier
199 ● Explosive Vegetation
200 ● Gigapede
201 ● Heedless One
202 ● Hystrodon
203 ● Invigorating Boon
204 ● Kamahl, Fist of Krosa
205 ● Kamahl's Summons
206 ● Krosan Colossus
207 ● Krosan Groundshaker
208 ○ Krosan Tusker
209 ● Mystic Snake
210 ● Overgrowth
211 ○ Overwhelming Instinct
212 ● Primal Boost
213 ● Rampant Growth
214 ● Scattershot
215 ● Serpentine Basilisk
216 ● Silklash Spider
217 ● Silvos, Rogue Elemental
218 ● Skyshroud Condor
219 ● Spitting Cobra
220 ● Stag Beetle
221 ● Steely Resolve
222 ● Symbiotic Beast
223 ● Symbiotic Elf
224 ● Symbiotic Wurm
225 ● Tanglewalker Elf
226 ● Tempting Wurm
227 ● Towering Baloth
228 ● Treespring Lorian
229 ● Tribal Unity
230 ● Venomspout Brackus
231 ● Vitality Charm
232 ● Voice of the Woods
233 ● Wall of Mulch
234 ● Wellwisher
235 ● Wirewood Elf
236 ● Wirewood Herald
237 ● Wirewood Pride
238 ● Wirewood Savage
239 ● Words of Wilding

240 ● Doom Cannon
241 ● Riptide Replicator

242 ● Abyssal Gorger
243 ● Aphetto Runecaster
244 ● Arcanis the Omnipotent
245 ● Artificial Evolution
246 ● Ascending Aven
247 ● Aven Fateshaper
248 ● Backslide
249 ● Blatant Thievery
250 ● Callous Oppressor
251 ● Chain of Vapor
252 ● Choking Tethers
253 ● Clone
254 ● Complicate
255 ● Crafty Pathmage
256 ● Crown of Ascension
257 ● Discombobulate
258 ● Dispersing Orb
259 ● Disruptive Pitmage
260 ● Essence Fracture
261 ● Fleeting Aven
262 ● Future Sight
263 ● Ghosthelm Courier
264 ● Graxiplon
265 ● Imagecrafter
266 ● Information Dealer
267 ● Ixidor, Reality Sculptor
268 ● Ixidor's Will
269 ● Mage's Guile
270 ● Meddle
271 ● Mistform Dreamer
272 ● Mistform Mask
273 ● Mistform Mutant
274 ● Mistform Shrieker
275 ● Mistform Skyreaver
276 ● Mistform Stalker
277 ● Mistform Wall
278 ● Nameless One
279 ● Peer Pressure
280 ● Psychic Trance
281 ● Quicksilver Dragon
282 ● Read the Runes
283 ● Reminisce
284 ● Riptide Biologist
285 ● Riptide Chronologist
286 ● Riptide Entrancer
287 ● Riptide Shapeshifter
288 ● Rummaging Wizard
289 ● Sage Aven
290 ● Screaming Seahawk
291 ● Sea's Claim
292 ● Slipstream Eel
293 ● Spy Network
294 ● Standardize
295 ● Supreme Inquisitor
296 ● Trade Secrets
297 ● Trickery Charm
298 ● Voidmage Prodigy
299 ● Wheel and Deal
300 ● Words of Wind

301 ● Accursed Centaur
302 ● Anurid Murkdiver
303 ● Aphetto Dredging
304 ● Aphetto Vulture
305 ● Blackmail
306 ● Boneknitter
307 ● Cabal Archon
308 ● Cabal Executioner
309 ● Cabal Slaver
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✦ MARK ZUG
✦ KEN MEYER
✦ ROB ALEXANDER

MVPs MVPs

Featuring: Onslaught

by Monty Ashley

Constructed MVPs

Constructed MVPs include cards that generate efficient card advantage, are extremely flexible, enable certain deck types (including quality mana fixers that allow multicolor decks), and have a powerful and influential effect on the game. Most big creatures can often be useful in small numbers in Constructed decks, but aren't considered Constructed MVPs unless they are really special (like the untargetable Blastoderm). Cards that can be found in almost any Constructed deck using the appropriate colors are probably MVPs. Cards like Birds of Paradise, Disenchant, Jackal Pup, City of Brass, and Duress are classic examples of Constructed MVPs.

Limited MVPs

Limited MVPs are slightly different from Constructed MVPs, even though there are many that will fall into both categories (such as Wrath of God and Earthquake). Limited MVPs have a significant and powerful impact on the game when they are played, either by allowing useful card advantage or by putting tremendous pressure on the opponent. Certain staple cards (like Zap or Giant Growth) might go into most Limited decks, but aren't considered Limited MVPs because they won't always have a huge impact on the game. Limited MVPs are cards that are potential first picks in Draft and always go into sealed decks that use the appropriate colors. Cards like Spiritmonger, Pestilence, Magma Burst, Pyre Zombie, and Rushing River are good examples of Limited MVPs.

Sideboard MVPs

Sideboard MVPs have a tremendous impact versus particular deck types, but are typically not versatile enough to be included in main decks. Cards like Boil, the Circles of Protection, Perish, and Anarchy are typical examples of Sideboard MVPs.

Blistering Firecat

Blistering Firecat
Trample, haste
At end of turn, sacrifice Blistering Firecat.
Morph (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)

BALL LIGHTNING'S BIG BROTHER

Blistering Firecat may look familiar to anyone who's played **Magic** for more than a few years. It's suspiciously similar in many ways to longtime powerhouse Ball Lightning. In fact, with the addition of one colorless mana to its mana cost and 1 point to its power, the Firecat is almost exactly like the Ball, except slightly larger.

Being larger means that it can't swing for 6 on turn three, of course. But the morph ability means that it won't be stuck in your hand while you wait for your third red mana. The morph ability also means that if you'd rather have a chump blocker than a 7/1 trampler with haste (which *can* happen—sometimes) you can just put it out as a vanilla 2/2 that doesn't die at the end of the turn. And if your vanilla 2/2 is just going to die anyway, you can flip it into a 7/1 and take out the creature you were chump blocking.

Complicate

Counter target spell unless its controller pays 3.
Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
When you cycle Complicate, you may counter target spell unless its controller pays 1.

COUNTERING SPELLS MADE SIMPLE

At first, Complicate looks a lot like Mana Leak for one more mana. That's not terrible—Mana Leak was a great card. Forcing people to pay three extra mana for a spell is tantamount to countering it a lot of the time, and not having the double-colored mana requirement of Counterspell let Mana Leak fit into decks other than monoblue. Even if it were just "Mana Leak for 1 more," Complicate might see play. The cycling ability, though, adds a whole new spell to the card.

Specifically, the card it adds is Force Void, from *Ice Age*, which cost 2 and countered a spell unless its controller paid 1. Complicate has two advantages over Force Void. First, you get to draw a card right away, while Force Void, being an *Ice Age* cantrip, put the draw at the beginning of the next upkeep. Second, an effect created by cycling a card isn't "playing a spell," so it can't be countered. This won't come into play very often, because the cycling version of Complicate won't normally target people with a lot of mana to spare, but it's worth keeping in mind.

Dwarven Blastminer

Dwarven Blastminer
2, Destroy target nonbasic land.
Morph (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
"Life is too short for something like a hunk of rock to get in my way."

TAP TO DESTROY LAND

Any time a creature can tap to destroy an opponent's permanents, that's card advantage. When those permanents are the nonbasic lands that the opponent was relying on to get access to multiple colors of mana (or sometimes even more powerful effects), the advantage is even greater. One of the drawbacks of the original Dwarven Miner was that once it was in play, opponents were understandably reluctant to play out more nonbasic lands. The Blastminer's morph ability, however, allows it to hide in plain sight, waiting for an unsuspecting Contested Cliffs.

The other use of the morph ability is more direct. Sometimes, a red deck just isn't in the mood for a 1/1 utility creature. In those cases, a Gray Ogre can be just what the doctor ordered. And thanks to red's array of powerful morph creatures like Blistering Firecat, opponents can never be sure whether that face-down creature is an innocent 1/1 or something much more powerful.

Fetch Lands

, Pay 1 life, Sacrifice Bloodstained Mire: Search your library for a swamp or mountain card and put it into play. Then shuffle your library.

FETCH LANDS ARE BACK

"*Mirage* Fetch Lands Rock." That was the verdict of DCI Manager Jeff Donais back before he worked for Wizards of the Coast, when he was just the guy who was about to finish eighteenth at the 1997 World Championships. He liked the fact that unlike Thawing Glaciers, the *Mirage* lands could be used without spending mana. The new fetch lands work even faster, being able to get a land on the turn they come into play.

The cost of 1 life is almost negligible. Compare Bloodstained Mire to Sulfurous Springs: on the turn they come into play, each can give access to either a red or a black mana at the cost of 1 life. The Springs has the benefit that it can continue to be tapped for either color of mana on future turns, while the Mire makes you choose right away. On the other hand, the Mire only costs 1 life—ever. Add in the inherent deck-thinning power all fetch lands come with, and they just might be the best cards in *Onslaught*.

Future Sight

EVERY CARD'S A CANTRIP

In effect, Future Sight is a cantrip, because as soon as you play it, you're allowed to play the top card of your library as though it were in your hand. But because you can always play the top card of your library, all of those cards turn into cantrips as well. Even lands replace themselves immediately as Future Sight provides more than enough card advantage to make up for its heavy cost.

Future Sight also provides protection from hand destruction. No matter what happens, as long as you have a library, there's always at least one card effectively in your hand. The worst-case scenario is that it might sometimes be a card you can't play right away, like a Counterspell, but even then, you're "stuck" for a turn with your opponent knowing you have a cantrip Counterspell aimed at his or her next spell. When your next draw comes along, a different card will take its place on top of your library anyway. There are worse situations to be in.

Goblin Sharpshooter

Goblin Sharpshooter doesn't untap during your untap step.
Whenever a creature is put into a graveyard from play, untap Goblin Sharpshooter.
: Goblin Sharpshooter deals 1 damage to target creature or player.

LAYING WASTE TO WEENIES

The pinging ability of Prodigal Sorcerer has always been prized in Limited for its ability to remove the various 1-toughness utility creatures that tend to populate the board and play havoc with combat math. Goblin Sharpshooter starts with the ability to deal 1 point of damage to any target, but then adds both an advantage and a disadvantage.

One thing the Sharpshooter can be used for is to clean the board of opposing 1-toughness creatures at a shot, as it untaps every time it kills one—squirrel decks will not be pleased to see this creature. It also untaps whenever one of your own creatures dies, which means that you can block a 5/5 with a 3/3, ping the 5/5 before damage resolves, untap the Sharpshooter when your 3/3 dies, and then deal the final point of damage to the 5/5, killing it and ending up with an untapped Sharpshooter. Even if things don't always work out quite that neatly, enough creatures usually die in the course of a game for the Sharpshooter to deal plenty of extra damage to your opponent's side.

Grinning Demon

Grinning Demon
Creature — Demon
At the beginning of your upkeep, you lose 2 life.
Morph 2 (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
It's drawn to the scent of screaming.

HE SMILES AS HE KILLS YOU

Grinning Demon is like a Juzám Djinn, only bigger. Even the alleged drawback is bigger, but most people would be willing to lose 2 life a turn if they could attack for 6. Enormous black creatures are naturally resistant to both direct damage and black removal, so once the Demon comes out (on turn four with no mana acceleration), it's going to present problems for almost anyone.

And then there's the morph ability. At first glance, Grinning Demon's morph ability doesn't save you any mana over playing it normally. On the other hand, you could play it face-down on turn three and then flip it over during your attack on turn four, not only getting to swing for 6 a turn early but also avoiding the 2-life drawback for a turn. Really, though, the morph is probably going to be used most often as a threat; if your opponent knows you have at least one Grinning Demon in your deck, he'll never be sure what it will take to kill that random face-down creature on your side of the board.

Hystrodon

Hystrodon
Creature — Beast
Trample
Whenever Hystrodon deals combat damage to a player, you may draw a card.
Morph 1 (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)

IF OPHIDIAN WERE MUCH LARGER

Remember Ophidian? Blue decks got a lot of mileage out of turning their combat phases into extra draw steps, didn't they? Well, now it's green's turn. With Hystrodon's trample ability, an opponent can't even chump block—once it hits the table, the Hystrodon should immediately be either drawing you cards or killing a couple of your opponent's creatures. Either way, it's worth the investment.

The morph ability means that once your opponent has seen your Hystrodon once, he or she will start seeing it everywhere. Is it safe to let that vanilla 2/2 through unblocked, taking the risk of letting 3 damage through and allowing a card draw? Or should several creatures be devoted to blocking every time? The morphing also gives Hystrodon a boost in monogreen decks. If it's in a two-color deck, it probably won't be out before turn five on a regular basis, but a deck heavily devoted to green can reliably pay the morph cost on turn four—or even earlier with just a little mana acceleration.

Meddle

If target spell has only one target and that target is a creature, change that spell's target to another creature.
Strength may win the fight, but style wins the crowd.

NOT SO FAST!

It's been a few years since the days of *Mirage*, so not everyone is going to recognize Meddle. What it does, essentially, is mess with your opponent's head and kill his or her creatures. Almost all the spells that target single creatures are either removal, in which case Meddle gets a two-for-one (you spend the Meddle while your opponent spends the removal spell and loses a creature) or a Giant Growth–style creature-pumper. Since pumpers like that are often used to kill creatures while blocking, Meddle works out the same. Even when Meddle isn't able to directly kill an opponent's creature, it usually at least counters a spell by redirecting it to someplace harmless.

Meddle also works on creature enchantments. Before the enchantment resolves, it's a spell targeting a single creature, so your opponent's Crown of Vigor or Mythic Proportions will suddenly turn against him. In fact, the only way for Meddle to be a dead card is if you're facing someone who's playing nothing but creatures, in which case you at least know what you're facing, and the Meddle has bought you peace of mind.

Mobilization

OUTPOST IS BACK

Years ago, there was a card called Kjeldoran Outpost, which was feared everywhere it went for its ability to pump out a near-infinite number of 1/1 "dudes". Combined with a fistful of counterspells, it proved a powerful weapon for years and years, and now it's back—in enchantment form. The cost to put out a Soldier is essentially the same as before: 2 as opposed to 1 plus tapping the Outpost.

The original Outpost could put out Soldiers at a pace of one per turn, while Mobilization has no upper limit. In addition, the creatures don't tap to attack, which means that in a pinch, they can chump block whatever creature your opponent has on the table. The only downside, apart from the fact that it can't be tapped for like the Outpost, is that as an enchantment, it's slightly more vulnerable than it was as a land. Time will tell if that's enough of a drawback to keep the 1/1 Soldiers from overrunning the world again.

Naturalize

THE GREEN DISENCHANT

It's funny how a change of scenery can make an old favorite new and exciting. Since the beginning of **Magic**, white has been able to destroy an artifact or enchantment at instant speed for the cost of one colored mana and one colorless. Now that same card has had the serial numbers filed off, and instead of being called Disenchant, it's called Naturalize. And it's just what green needed!

Green has long been able to deal with artifacts and enchantments individually, but a Crumble or Tranquility would sit in the green mage's hand unless an appropriate target happened by. Now green has the versatility to pack this all-purpose sideboard weapon against all manner of opposing strategies. Instead of deciding whether you're more worried about one type of permanent, you can prepare yourself for two kinds at once—and versatility is always good.

Longtime white mages will no doubt complain that their old friend Disenchant has been taken from them, and they're right to be disappointed. Artifact destruction was never supposed to be white's strong suit, though, and white decks now have Demystify, which takes care of enchantments for a measly ✸.

Oversold Cemetery

Oversold Cemetery
Enchantment
At the beginning of your upkeep, if you have four or more creature cards in your graveyard, you may return target creature card from your graveyard to your hand.

THE DEAD LIVE AGAIN

All in all, the only problem with Oath of Ghouls was that it was symmetrical. No matter how much planning and forethought went into the building of the deck, there was always the chance that the wrong person would be returning creatures from his or her graveyard to his or her hand. Oversold Cemetery removes the uncertainty; as long as you can get four creatures into your graveyard, whether through discarding them, letting them get killed, or even cycling them, you get one back on each upkeep. So as long as you continue to have enough dead creatures, you continue to double your draws, getting a random card from the top of your deck and the creature of your choice from your graveyard. At worst, you have an endless supply of chump blockers. At best, you can set up all sorts of complicated combos, such as repeatedly cycling a Krosan Tusker, which translates to drawing an extra card and getting an extra land each time until you have enough mana to play the Tusker and go to town.

There are other uses to which Oversold Cemetery could be put. Creatures with powerful comes-into-play or leaves-play abilities can be abused over and over by repeatedly sacrificing them and bringing them back. Haunted Cadaver can sacrifice itself to make your opponent discard three cards and then come back for more. If something happens that destroys all creatures in play, you can recover with ease. The possibilities are even more tempting in Standard, where *Onslaught* will coexist with *Odyssey* block and its variety of threshold-enabling spells and creatures. You can use a card like Careful Study to reach threshold, and if you have regrets about a creature that got milled away, you can bring it right back to your hand the next turn. Because it's a "may" ability, you'll never be forced to lose threshold.

Krosan Tusker
Creature — Beast
Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
When you cycle Krosan Tusker, you may search your library for a basic land card, reveal that card, and put it into your hand. Then shuffle your library.

CYCLE HIM UNTIL YOU CAN AFFORD HIM

The best use for Oversold Cemetery, though, is probably a degenerate combo of some sort. Because the set has just come out, nobody's come up with it yet, but there's little doubt that the most devious minds in **Magic** are studying it and looking through card lists for the ideal creatures to combine with it. Who knows what Oversold Cemetery decks the next few months will bring?

Ravenous Baloth

Ravenous Baloth
Creature — Beast
Sacrifice a Beast: You gain 4 life.
"All we know about the Krosan Forest we have learned from those few who made it out alive."
Elvish refugee
4/4

MONSTERS = LIFE FOR YOU

A 4/4 for four mana is a good deal. From time to time, you can get a slightly larger creature, but 4 power and 4 toughness is perfectly acceptable. If you get a special ability into the bargain, that seals the deal. Life-gain on its own has never been a tier-one strategy, but on the short list of life-gaining cards that made an impact on the Pro Tour is a green card that could trade its existence for 4 life: Spike Feeder. Spike Feeder, at three mana, was a little faster, but it made up for that by being half the size of the Ravenous Baloth. While players certainly could move the Feeder's spikes around, the most common thing to do with a Spike Feeder was to block, remove the counters, and gain 4 life while losing the creature.

The Baloth's ability is better than that, though; while it's in play, *any* of your Beasts is worth 4 life at a moment's notice. Whenever your opponent succeeds in killing one of them, it just adds to your life total. If your opponent is forced to block one of your large monsters with two smaller monsters, he or she is not only giving up two for one, but also working directly against the basic goal of reducing you to 0 life. All you have to do is keep coming up with Beasts, and in *Onslaught*, there's no shortage of them.

In Extended, the list of Beasts is even longer, and there are some real gems waiting to be plugged into a deck. Old favorites like Blastoderm can join more recent fatties like Anurid Brushhopper and the tokens from Beast Attack to create a surprisingly efficient army of large green monsters.

Shared Triumph

CHEAPER THAN COAT OF ARMS

In *Onslaught*, creature type matters. Just like in *Invasion* block, where multicolor strategies abounded, *Onslaught* is designed for decks packing mostly the same creature type. In those decks, Shared Triumph is going to be as good as Crusade. In fact, because some creature types (like Cleric) go across colors, Shared Triumph can pump up an army of many colors; that's where its mana cost of 1 ✸ (as opposed to Crusade's ✸✸) can come in handy.

Will Shared Triumph bring back "White Weenie"? It's possible. Combined with white's array of Soldiers, it adds value to all of your creatures and can provide the boost needed to kill your opponent a turn or two earlier. Also, keep in mind that Shared Triumph will affect a creature as long as at least one of the creature's types matches up to the type you chose. If you have two Shared Triumphs, one set to "Cleric" and one to "Soldier", and you have one Cleric, one Soldier, and one Cleric Soldier in play, each of your Shared Triumphs will affect two of your creatures, with the Cleric Soldier benefiting from both.

Engineered Plague
Enchantment
As Engineered Plague comes into play, choose a creature type
All creatures of the chosen type get -1 -1.

THE ANTI-TRIUMPH

Shared Triumph also works directly against one of the cards that *Onslaught* is going to make very powerful in Standard: Engineered Plague. While *Onslaught* is encouraging everyone to make decks with many creatures of the same type, the Plague will no doubt be lurking, ready to level whole armies. But Shared Triumph works like Engineered Plague in reverse—when the two are in play (and set to the same creature type), they cancel each other out, and if you get your Triumphs before your opponent gets his Plagues, he'll be needing them not to kill you, but to stay alive himself.

Smother

Smother
Instant
Destroy target creature with converted mana cost 3 or less. It can't be regenerated.
"I can't hear them scream, but at least I don't have to listen to them beg."
—Phage the Untouchable
Illus. Carl Critchlow

TAKE THAT, PSYCHATOG!

Historically, removal has come with limitations. Terror could only kill nonblack, non-artifact creatures. Topple could only target the biggest creature on the board. But Smother's restriction isn't based on anything about the creature itself, only the creature's mana cost. That means that the creatures it's best at killing are the ones that are more powerful than their mana costs would suggest. Cards like, just to take one example, Psychatog.

It also means there's nothing your opponent can do about a Smother on the stack. If you target a Wild Mongrel with Ghastly Demise, your opponent could change it to black, increase its toughness, or remove cards from your graveyard to counter the Demise, but because Smother looks at Wild Mongrel's mana cost, there's nothing your opponent can do except shrug as the Wild Mongrel goes to the graveyard.

Smother also kills face-down creatures, which have a mana cost of 0. In this case, they could be flipped over to change their mana cost to the actual cost of the creature, but that's a small drawback for a creature-kill card that should be able to target at least half the creatures in any opposing draft deck.

Solar Blast

Solar Blast deals 3 damage to target creature or player.
Cycling 1 (1, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
When you cycle Solar Blast, you may have it deal 1 damage to target creature or player.

SHOULD HAVE WORN SUN-BLOCK

Solar Blast is a card that people are going to have to get used to seeing in Limited. Without its cycling ability, it's a four-mana Lightning Bolt, which is probably good enough to use on its own, but the option of cycling it while doing 1 damage to a target puts it over the top. Suddenly, it's an uncounterable Zap, albeit one that requires a slightly larger investment in red.

So how good is a common that can reliably deal 1 damage while replacing itself and can sometimes take out a three-toughness creature? It's probably not the best red common in the set, because Shock is just amazing, but it's certainly good enough that anyone facing a deck with red in it will have to be ready for masses of direct damage.

Voidmage Prodigy

Prodigy
, Sacrifice a Wizard: Counter target spell.
Morph (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)

KAI BUDDE IS POWERFUL

Kai Budde is the best player in **Magic**, and his card (which he designed after winning the 2001 **Magic** Invitational) might be the best card in *Onslaught*. In a deck full of Wizards and Counterspells, Voidmage Prodigy represents an almost insurmountable obstacle, because the Prodigy's spell-countering ability is not itself a spell, and thus cannot be countered. There's no tapping involved, so Voidmage Prodigy and any other Wizards on the board can attack if the way is clear and still be able to counter spells.

The Prodigy also has great synergy with other Wizards, such as Patron Wizard and Psychic Trance, which turn all your Wizards in play into Force Spikes and Counterspells, respectively. And the morph cost of Voidmage Prodigy is extremely low, allowing you to keep it hidden until the absolute last moment. In the worst-case scenario of an Engineered Plague resolving, it's not that bad an idea to take a 1-toughness Wizard and disguise it as a 2/2 vanilla creature.

You can read more about Voidmage Prodigy in Kai's own words on page 32.

Wall of Mulch

Wall of Mulch
Creature — Wall
(Walls can't attack.)
, Sacrifice a Wall: Draw a card.
Mulch is the fabric of life in the forest. Plants live in it, they die in it, and then they become part of it, feeding countless generations to come.
0/4

DRAWING CARDS IS FUN

It takes a remarkable Wall to be successful in Constructed. The last one to really make a splash was Wall of Blossoms, which dominated the 1999 U.S. Nationals in the five-color control deck of the time. When Wall of Blossoms came into play, its controller drew a card. Wall of Mulch works on much the same pattern—once it outlives its usefulness, it should be able to replace itself in your hand. It can be played early as a blocker for your opponent's cheap creatures and then, once you no longer need it, turned into a more exciting card. In this respect, it's more like Wall of Roots than Wall of Blossoms. Wall of Roots comes out very early and holds off attackers while helping out with mana problems, and by the time it goes away, its controller doesn't really need the Wall anyway.

While *Odyssey* block is around, Wall of Mulch is a great way to get to threshold. It's not useless while it's in play, and it can effectively cycle itself at any time. Wall of Mulch also interacts well with Oversold Cemetery and other strategies that rely on a full graveyard.

Because Wall of Mulch lets you sacrifice other Walls, too, its potential applications are more varied. If you combine Wall of Mulch with cards that change creature types, such as Unnatural Selection or one of *Onslaught*'s Illusions, none of your creatures will ever die in vain. In theory, a deck using Wall of Mulch, Rolling Stones, and many, many Walls could work. Even if the more tricky plans don't work out, Wall of Mulch should make an appearance, presenting problems for weenie decks.

Whipcorder

, : Tap target creature.
Morph (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
His bolas whirl like galaxies, but it's his enemies who see stars
2/2

MASTER DECOY WITH MUSCLE

Whipcorder starts off better than Master Decoy. It has the same creature-tapping ability, but changing the colorless mana in Master Decoy's 1 mana cost to white gave Whipcorder another point of power, turning it into a white Grizzly Bears with a great ability. So while Master Decoy was of most use on defense, Whipcorder is equally at home attacking for 2 or disabling a potential attacker. This versatility means that no matter what's happening in the game, Whipcorder will be a valuable creature.

If the white-intensive cost is too hard for decks of multiple colors, the morph cost means you really only need to muster one white mana to get it on the board and active. The presence of morph cards that cost very little to flip over is important, because it means your opponent can never be sure what your creatures are about to do. Of course, being a 2/2 either way means that your opponent probably won't be too surprised by whatever happens, but there are certainly occasions where the addition of color, creature type, and rules text can throw off your opponent's calculations.

, Search your library for a Rebel card with converted mana cost 2 or less and put that card into play. Then shuffle your library
Her commands are part rallying cry, part sermon, and wholly undeniable

ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW REBELS

In a set where creature type matters more than even, Whipcorder's types bear close examination. The "Soldier" part is pretty standard for *Onslaught* white creatures, but the Whipcorder is also a Rebel, and that means that in Extended, it can drop right into the Rebel deck. Whipcorder has a mana cost of only two, so it can be the target of any of the searchers, even Ramosian Sergeant. Expect Whipcorder to directly replace Fresh Volunteers and cause even more problems for the decks that face Rebels.

Fetch Lands are Back

And Playing Your Spells is Easier than Ever

by Aaron Forsythe

Brian Schneider calls *Onslaught* "the best land set since Beta."

He should know—as a **Magic** developer that worked on *Onslaught,* he's been playing with the cards for the better part of a year. "We want people to be able to play their spells," he says, referring to Research & Development's new stance on nonbasic lands. These latest lands allow players to do just that, stabilizing mana bases and thinning libraries, sometimes at the same time.

Onslaught boasts creature-based utility lands, from Riptide Laboratory, which can bounce a Wizard back to its controller's hand, to Contested Cliffs, which is sort of an "Arena" for Beasts, but the focus here will be on the two cycles of nonbasic lands that were made to let players get to their spells and play them.

Instead of being a completely new idea, each of the two cycles is a huge improvement on an existing one. First, a look at the first Expert-level keyword ever to be brought back . . .

Cycling is a mechanic that allows a card to be discarded for a cost in order to draw a replacement. It debuted in *Urza's Saga,* appearing on several cards including five common lands. That set did not utilize the mechanic to its fullest, however; R&D gave every cycling card a blanket cycling cost of 2, and left it at that. The door was open for some rethinking and expanding of the mechanic, and that's what happened in *Onslaught.* Forgotten Cave is an improved Smoldering Crater, cycling for ◒ instead of 2. Each of the other four colors receives a functionally similar land (Secluded Steppe, Lonely Sandbar, Barren Moor, and Tranquil Thicket).

The reduction of the cycling cost from two mana to one is significant. In Constructed play, the goal is usually to spend every mana every turn, and most decks are built hoping never to have any spare mana, let alone two to cycle a land with. In reality, though, there are several turns, often including the first, on which decks have nothing to do. Forgotten Cave and its ilk help remedy that situation. You can either play it—tapped—on turn one, leaving no mana unused, or you can play a different land and cycle the Cave, getting one card deeper into your deck.

Because lands are the most redundant part of any deck, swapping four basics for four cycling versions will often be a good idea. A monored deck, for example, can now play fifteen mountains, four Barbarian Rings, and four Forgotten Caves, which is an upgrade when it comes to getting enough mana early and drawing "business spells" late.

These lands should be player-favorites in Limited as well, allowing a seventeen-land deck to feel like it has fifteen when it can afford to. The only drawback they have when compared to their *Urza's Saga* counterparts is that off-colored versions cannot be cycled. Gone are the days of splashing two Polluted Mires and an Expunge, but that is a small price to pay for the upgrade of this class of card.

While the cycling cards are common, there's another family of five lands in the rare slots of *Onslaught:* the new "fetch lands".

R&D had other plans for these lands when the set was first designed. They were going to be reprints or remakes of the "stay-tapped" lands from *Tempest,* like Vec Townships. After a little discussion, it was agreed that players weren't warm to those lands the first time they were printed and there was no reason to think they'd be well received the second time around. R&D then shifted gears and looked to a more popular cycle of uncommon lands from an old expansion, the *Mirage* fetch lands. These lands came into play tapped, but once untapped, could be sacrificed to search for either of two allied basic land types, such as island or plains. Flood Plain, Bad River, and the rest were quite popular, even when they were Standard-legal and were *not* being used to fetch Tundras and other dual lands.

The development team put them into *Onslaught,* but realized a problem during playtesting. The cycling lands and the fetch lands played poorly together; too many comes-into-play-tapped lands put a strain on deckbuilding. It was if every game was played under a Kismet.

Pay 1 life, Sacrifice Flooded Strand: Search your library for a plains or island card and put it into play. Then shuffle your library.

The cycling lands weren't going anywhere, so the fetch lands needed to be rethought. The obvious solution was to have them come into play untapped, but doing so would require the addition of some sort of drawback, in order to avoid making them strictly better than basic lands. The smallest drawback imaginable—the loss of a single point of life when the land was activated—was added to the cards, and that's how they ended up.

The result: a cycle of five lands—Flooded Strand, Windswept Heath, Wooded Foothills, Bloodstained Mire, and Polluted Delta—that should be some of the most sought-after cards in the set.

These lands have big shoes to fill. When *Onslaught* becomes legal in Standard, it does so at the expense of the *Invasion* block. That rotation means the loss of comes-into-play-tapped duals like Salt Marsh, Dragon lairs such as Rith's Grove, and the *Apocalypse* pain lands. Additionally, the arrival of *Onslaught* marks the end of an era in Extended—the original Alpha dual lands (Taiga and the like) will get their overdue rest, and the *Mirage* fetch lands, *Alliances*'s Thawing Glaciers, and *Weatherlight*'s Gemstone Mine will join them on the sidelines.

It's clear that Constructed **Magic** will need a shot in the arm in the realm of dual lands, and the *Onslaught* lands aim to please. In Standard, they have great synergy with the graveyard-oriented mechanics from the *Odyssey* block. Aggressive decks will love the deck-thinning potential of these lands. An opening hand including two Wooded Foothills and a Wild Mongrel is a thing of beauty. A deck with 24 land will be thinned down to 20 after only two turns with no loss of tempo—quite a bargain for only 2 life.

Because these lands replace themselves with basic lands, they are much friendlier to Incarnations than other dual lands were. That same opening hand of Wooded Foothills, Wooded Foothills, and Wild Mongrel becomes downright scary if you add Anger to the mix, and a Basking Rootwalla and an Arrogant Wurm mean game over. Try doing *that* with Karplusan Forest.

But don't think of these new fetch lands as competition for the stalwart Ice Age pain lands—they're more like complimentary brothers. An aggressive deck with four *Onslaught* fetch lands and four pain lands (and possibly a few *Odyssey* filter lands, like Mossfire Valley) should have no problems finding the right colored mana. It's even possible to splash cards into otherwise color-heavy decks. Four Adarkar Wastes, four Flooded Strands, and one plains can support a few copies of Worship or Disenchant in a deck with four Patron Wizards and four Counterspells. Similarly, Beast decks can diversify their mana bases to support Earthquake, Ravenous Baloth, and Anurid Brushhopper. Add in a few Tainted lands from *Torment,* and black-blue and black-red decks have never had better mana.

In Extended, the death knell of multi-colored decks may have been sounded prematurely. While Flooded Strand is no Tundra, it's certainly better than Coastal Tower in "White Weenie" decks, allowing them to keep cards like Meddling Mage on the roster in addition to double-white spells like Crusade and the new Rebel, Whipcorder. Just like their *Mirage* predecessors, these new fetch lands have excellent synergy with deck manipulation spells like Brainstorm and Scroll Rack, allowing "free shuffles" and finding the desired mana. For a more esoteric use, it's possible that some aggressive monocolored decks, such as 10-land "Stompy", will consider running a few fetch lands for the purpose of deck thinning.

The best characteristic of these cards in Extended is their nigh-invulnerability to the slew of nonbasic land hate in the format. Barring bizarre circumstances, Wasteland's ability will not resolve against these lands, and Dust Bowl's won't, either. Ruination and Back to Basics will miss the mark. Price of Progress will be laughed off as the nonbasic land is traded in for basic at a moment's notice. The ability of these lands to dodge the bullets of nonbasic hosers while still enabling multicolored decks should definitely put a spark into the newly revamped Extended format.

For all the goodness they bring to the table, the ultimate power of Polluted Delta and the rest of these lands will not be felt on the Pro Tour or Pro Tour Qualifier circuit, but rather in Type 1, 5-color, and other formats where the original dual lands are still legal. Fetching in these environments isn't limited to mundane basic lands. A turn-one Polluted Delta, or any such land, can get any color of mana if the deck is built correctly, from Volcanic Island to Bayou to Scrubland. In formats like Type 1 where the benefits of playing five colors often far outweigh the risks, it shouldn't be uncommon for players to eschew the fourth copy of traditional duals like Underground Sea in order to fit *Onslaught* fetch lands into their decks. And in the 5-color, 250-card format, where playing all colors is a requirement, 20 fetch lands and 40 original duals will become the status quo for some archetypes. Get yours quickly—everyone will be after them.

While mana-producing cards don't normally lend themselves to creative deckbuilding, surely someone out there will try to maximize the impact of *Onslaught*'s lands. In addition to normal threshold tricks, decks can be jam-packed with enough cycling and fetch lands that a turn-three Cartographer will always have something to bring back. Terravore, not seen since the days of the "Balancing 'Tings" deck, might have a reason to come out of retirement. Additionally, there are quite a few cards in *Onslaught* with abilities that trigger when a card is cycled, including the Shock-generating Lightning Rift, which will benefit adventurous players that pack their decks with cycling lands. Careful examination of the set should reveal more tricks worth trying out.

In closing, the praise of "best land set since Beta" is not ill-deserved. Many hours of playtesting have shown the cycling lands and the fetch lands to be worthy components of top-tier decks, and real-world **Magic** should play out the same. Many a game in R&D's internal Future Future League began with turn-one Polluted Delta, fetch an island, cycle a Lonely Sandbar. That's one turn, fixed mana, and two cards deeper into the library. Not bad for a bunch of land.

✦ ANTHONY S. WATERS

Voidmage Prodigy

by Kai Budde

Last year at the **Magic** Invitational in Cape Town, I sat down with Dan Clegg to play for the right to create a card. The match went over the full five formats and took five hours. It was close, but in 5-color **Magic**, the fifth format, a Jeweled Bird in the third and deciding game sealed victory for me. The card I originally came up with was Wisedrafter's Will, an enchantment for {B} that forced your opponent to play with his or her hand revealed, which you could also sacrifice for {B} to draw a card or for {B}{B} to counter a spell of your choice. Sadly, Research & Development turned that idea down because it was too powerful. Several friends told me that having your own creature is more fun, because you can attack with yourself. I thought about that for some time and had to agree with them.

I still liked the idea of Wisedrafter's Will and told Randy Buehler and Mark Rosewater what I would like the card to be like. They came up with a creature that let you sacrifice another creature of the same type to counter a spell. Voidmage Prodigy was the result, and it will see print in the *Onslaught* set.

The set will be legal for Standard very soon, and in this article I am going to talk about a deck based on Wizards. Meddling Mage, the most powerful Wizard around, won't be legal for Standard as soon as *Onslaught* rotates in. Shadowmage Infiltrator is an excellent card, but right now it would be the only black card I really want to splash for, and I don't think it is worth it. When the environment is better known, Duress might be an even better reason to splash black, but all I could do was read through the *Onslaught* card list and try to figure out what it would mean for Constructed. As two of the important cards in the deck have {B}{B}{B} in their mana costs, the version I will discuss here is monocolored.

The cards that make this strategy work are Patron Wizard, Voidmage Prodigy, and Future Sight. All three are pretty powerful on their own, but if they are all on the table at once, your opponent is going to have a difficult time staying in the game. Patron Wizard in combination with cheaper Wizards slows your opponent down, the Prodigy turns your smaller Wizards into real Counterspells, and Future Sight provides you with enough fuel to power up both of them.

So far Patron Wizard hasn't really seen any play in tournaments, but I'm telling you now that it can single-handedly win games for you. Let me explain why a Wizard deck is competitive now that *Onslaught* is out there.

First of all, most Constructed decks are designed to work best with two to four mana, especially those that are creature-based. That means that they usually run between 20 and 24 lands, and that makes them extremely vulnerable to Patron Wizard backed up by 2–3 other Wizards. To play their cards with mana costs of three or higher, they now need at least six mana sources in play. With most Standard decks running the lowest land count possible, getting that much mana is quite often a problem. When they eventually reach that point, Voidmage Prodigy turns all those annoying little guys into real Counterspells. Additionally, you have another extremely powerful *Onslaught* card that seals the game before your opponent ever gets to that point: Future Sight.

This enchantment basically works like a Temporal Aperture, but you have to pay the mana costs of the cards you turn up with it. If you look at this deck, you'll find that it is full of cheap spells, which maximizes the effect of Future Sight. Ideally, you can play a land and two to three spells each turn just off the top of your library. With just 22 lands in the deck, Future Sight can provide you with massive card advantage that most decks just can't keep up with. Putting additional Wizards into play with Patron Wizard and Voidmage Prodigy around is quite powerful. Future Sight is also the only real hope you have against red and black decks. Your tiny Wizards surely won't survive the various removal spells those decks can throw at them, but with this powerful enchantment in play, it is absolutely possible to just overwhelm your opponent.

Unfortunately, there is one flaw in the deck—you need some number of cheap Wizards. There are only two decent creatures for one mana, Hapless Researcher and Imagecrafter. Both abilities can come in handy at times but are overall not very exciting. Without both of those, though, Patron Wizard and Voidmage Prodigy are not powerful enough. At two mana you get a slightly better Wizard, Cephalid Scout. Sadly, there is no such thing as a Wizard that can swing for 2 damage that costs two mana, and Cephalid Scout has a decent ability that can come in handy against control decks. At three mana, you get a very good creature in Temporal Adept. Patron Wizard has the same mana cost and is more powerful, so I don't want to run four of the Adept.

The deck is a little slow early on, because those one-mana Wizards don't really accomplish much on their own. Making up for that are four Force Spikes, which slow other decks down and are also nice with Patron Wizard later on if you are missing that one Wizard to counter a spell. In addition to that, Counterspell is pretty much a no-brainer in a blue deck. Boomerang fits in well, as it is a great turn two play if you can follow it up with either Patron Wizard or Temporal Adept on turn three. To make sure 22 lands are enough, four copies of Sleight of Hand are in there. They also help in digging up that Patron Wizard, Future Sight, or Voidmage Prodigy when you need it to lock up the game.

Building a sideboard right now is quite difficult because I don't know what Standard will look like after *Onslaught* replaces the *Invasion* block. If monoblue decks are popular, three to four copies of Llawan, Cephalid Empress are a natural choice. Deep Analysis is a great card against control in general, and Envelop helps you fight black control, which will surely see a lot of play after Fact or Fiction leaves. Against red and black control, the Wizard plan is still fine, but usually they will have enough removal to make sure that you can't lock them up with Patron Wizard. Having only 1- or 2-toughess guys is also quite annoying. To make up for that, I suggest using three copies of Thought Devourer to make sure that you have something that can hit hard and survive burn spells. I am also assuming that there is going to be a large number of blue-green beatdown decks like the ones that are doing quite well in Block Constructed right now. Opposition is a great card against those because they don't carry that many creatures and you can easily shut down their attack with a few guys.

Right now this deck might have trouble keeping up with the green-blue and black powerhouses that rule *Odyssey* Block Constructed, but if R&D is kind enough to include a few more good Wizards in the small expansions following *Onslaught*, I'm sure that a Wizard deck is a valid and strong strategy.

May there always be a Voidmage Prodigy on the top of your library when you need it!

Wizards
2 Cephalid Scout
4 Hapless Researcher
2 Imagecrafter
4 Patron Wizard
3 Temporal Adept
4 Voidmage Prodigy
4 Boomerang
4 Counterspell
4 Force Spike
3 Future Sight
4 Sleight of Hand
22 Island
3 Deep Analysis
3 Envelop
3 Llawan, Cephalid Empress
3 Opposition
3 Thought Devourer
, Sacrifice a Wizard: Counter target spell
Morph
SCOTT M. FISCHER

Deck Changes in Standard

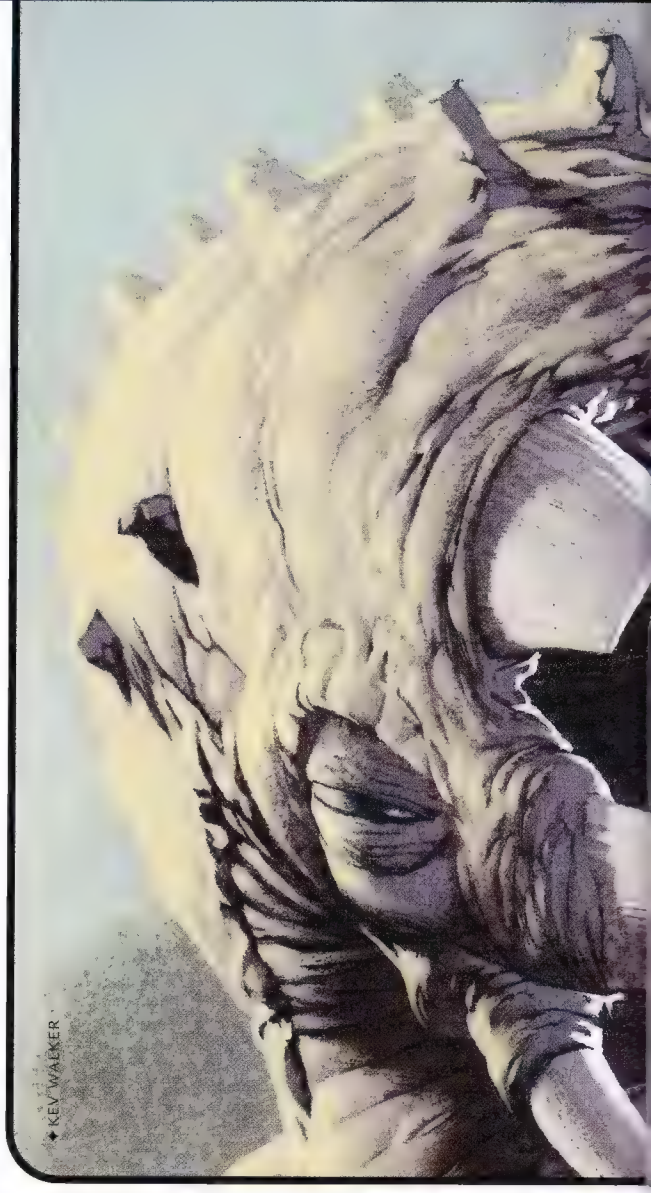
Effects of the Rotation

by Brian Kibler

The big story of the Standard environment this fall isn't so much the influx of new cards that the *Onslaught* expansion will be adding to the format, but rather the departure of *Invasion* block. When it was introduced in the fall of 2000, *Invasion* breathed new life into the Standard format, bringing interaction and diversity back to a format where monocolor beatdown and combination decks had become the norm. Over the past years, the cards from this block have come to define the format so thoroughly that it is hard to envision Standard without them.

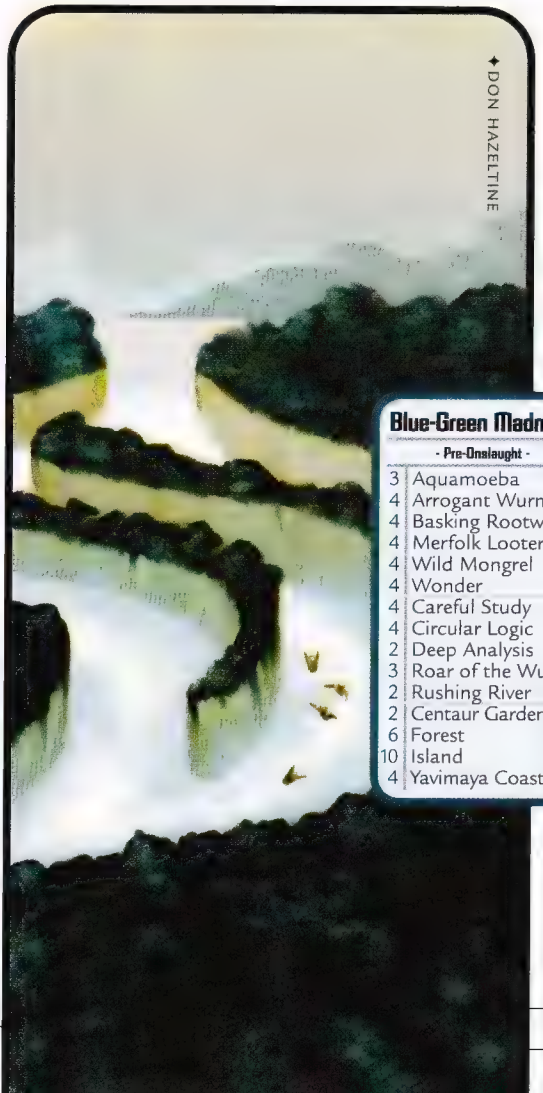
Just imagine being able to play a 4-toughness creature without the fear of Flametongue Kavu coming down and turning the game completely around. Imagine not having to hold back your Llanowar Elves and Birds of Paradise simply because your opponent just might have Fire/Ice. Just think about how much of a relief it will be to be able to say "Go" to an opponent who is sitting back with four mana untapped and not have to worry about hearing the words, "At the end of your turn, I'll play Fact or Fiction." It's a whole new world out there.

Flametongue? Gone. Fire/Ice? Gone. Fact or Fiction, Repulse, Nightscape Familiar, Meddling Mage, Goblin Trenches, Urza's Rage, Pernicious Deed, Spiritmonger . . . all gone. These and other *Invasion* cards have formed the core of most of the successful Standard decks for the past two years, and now all of a sudden we're going to have to learn to play without them. Every time a block rotates out of Standard, players are faced with this situation, but no rotation in recent memory has had such dramatic and sweeping implications as this one. *Invasion* block allowed players to dip into three, four, or even five colors for their spells, with splashes for power cards like Flametongue Kavu more common than not. With the loss of the comes-into-play-tapped lands from *Invasion*, as well as the opposing-color pain lands from *Apocalypse,* such splashes will become either less common or more painful, with City of Brass standing out as the best remaining option.



✦ KEV WALKER

Amidst all of these changes, however, one powerful deck in the current Standard environment manages to emerge virtually unscathed. Though it didn't post particularly impressive results at this year's World Championships, blue-green madness-beatdown was widely recognized as one of the decks to beat, and Antonio De Rosa managed to vindicate the deck's performance with a victory at the $10,000 Australian Open during the team day of the main event. His deck featured only eight cards between deck and sideboard that won't be legal when *Onslaught* rotates in, and four of those were Yavimaya Coasts, which can be replaced—albeit painfully—by four copies of City of Brass. The others, two main deck Rushing Rivers and two sideboarded Unnatural Selections, aren't integral to the deck's strategy and will not be overly missed, thanks to some choice *Onslaught* additions.



✦ DON HAZELTINE

Blue-Green Madness

- Pre-Onslaught -

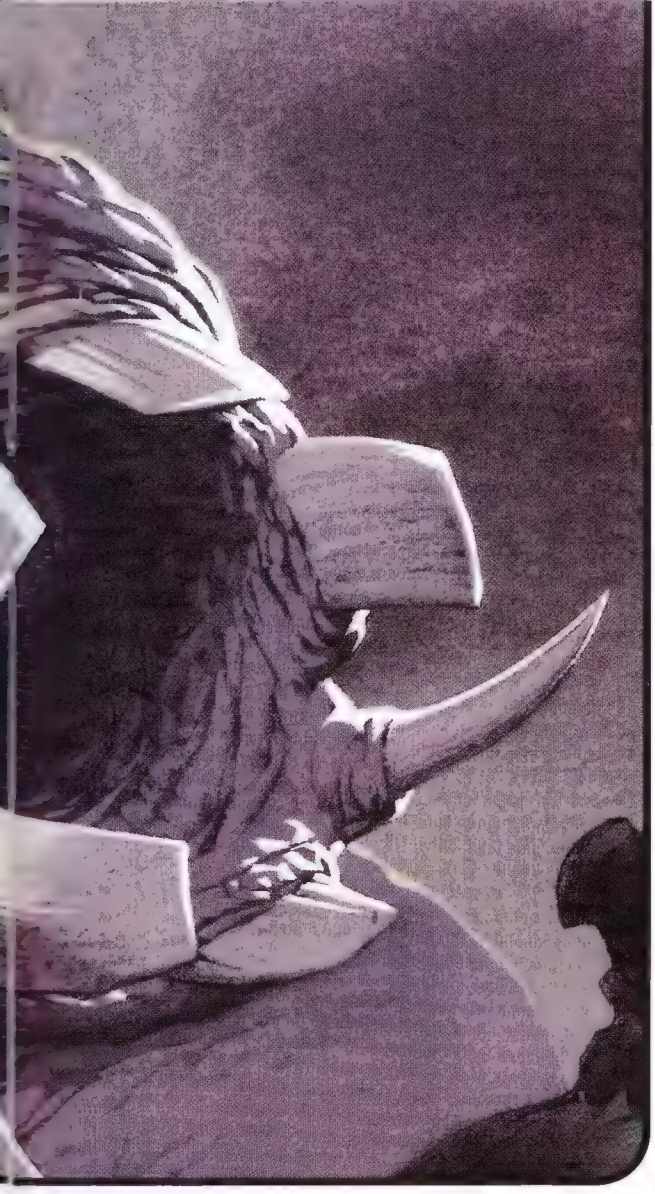
3	Aquamoeba
4	Arrogant Wurm
4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Wonder
4	Careful Study
4	Circular Logic
2	Deep Analysis
3	Roar of the Wurm
2	Rushing River
2	Centaur Garden
6	Forest
10	Island
4	Yavimaya Coast

sideboard

2	Phantom Centaur
2	Quiet Speculation
2	Ray of Revelation
1	Roar of the Wurm
3	Stupefying Touch
3	Sylvan Safekeeper
2	Unnatural Selection

What cards does this deck gain from the introduction of *Onslaught*? Unfortunately, not much, but that's actually not particularly important. What's considerably more significant when evaluating this deck's potential for success in the new Standard metagame is what cards other decks lose. The greatest problems for blue-green madness are those cards that allow the opponent to deal with its undercosted threats without giving up card or tempo advantage. The most significant of these is clearly Flametongue Kavu, which has been the foremost nemesis of creature decks since it saw print in *Planeshift.* The otherwise-devastating opening of Wild Mongrel and Arrogant Wurm can be turned around completely by a single FTK, and multiples spell almost certain doom. Similarly, Fire/Ice provides an efficient, splashable answer to an early Merfolk Looter, or even a pair of Basking Rootwallas, blunting the edge of the blue-green deck's early offense. Even Repulse, bane of creature tokens everywhere, is not longer a threat, giving enormous 6/6 Wurms free reign over the Red Zone.

The new Standard, then, looks a great deal like *Odyssey* Block Constructed, where there is a noticeable lack of efficient creature removal in any color other than black. This made the only way to compete with the blazing speed of blue-green creature decks either to try to outrace them with your own tempo cards, like Æther Burst, Moment's Peace, or Prismatic Strands, or to try simply to kill everything they played with cards like Chainer's Edict, Innocent Blood, and Mutilate. While *Seventh Edition* and *Onslaught* certainly add a great deal to the diversity of this format, they do not offer up anything that can compete with *Invasion* block's tremendous set of creature removal and tempo advantage cards.



What *Seventh Edition* does add to the format, however, is a single card that has proven incredibly devastating for blue-green madness: Opposition. The breakout tournament for "Deep Dog", as the archetypical blue-green madness deck came to be called (to be amended to "Wonder Dog" with the inclusion of *Judgment* and Wonder) was English Nationals, where four players took the deck to a remarkable three Top 8 finishes, with the forth placing ninth. Just a week later, the deck showed up again at U.S. Nationals, played by top American pros, and yet posted only a single Top 8 result from Mike Long, who played a heavily-modified version of the English deck. The difference in the level of success of the deck at these two tournaments, it would seem, was largely a result of the popularity of "Squirrel-Opposition" decks, which proved to be a terrible matchup for the English Deep Dog. With no non-countermagic solutions to either Squirrel Nest or Opposition itself, Deep Dog has significant problems if either of these cards resolves, and—with an entirely creature based assault—essentially no way to win if both hit play.

De Rosa's Australian Open deck attempts to combat this vulnerability with a pair of main deck Rushing Rivers, giving him at least some kind of solution in the main deck to being locked down by Opposition. Wonder, additionally, makes Squirrel Nest alone into a non-issue, leaving Opposition itself as the only real problem. While many of the cards in the Squirrel-Opposition decks are rotating out, like Fire/Ice, Flametongue Kavu, and the dual lands to support them, this simply means that these decks will become streamlined to feature only two colors, so they remain a threat. The devastating Teferi's Response is also leaving the format, along with Recoil, leaving no easy answer to Opposition that is accessible with Cunning Wish. Similarly, with Rushing River gone, there's no effective solution for the blue enchantment that Wonder Dog can play main deck, leaving a significant hole in the deck's defenses.

Again, one can look to De Rosa's deck for answers, and if Opposition were the only concern, the pair of Ray of Revelations in the sideboard might be enough. However, one of the significant advantages of Rushing River is that it can be used to deal with any kind of problem permanent. It's a catch-all solution for any sort of ugly situation that may arise, from Opposition or Worship to Ensnaring Bridge or Grafted Skullcap. The former can be dealt with effectively by Ray of Revelation; the latter, however, cannot. World Championships finalist Mark Ziegner qualified for that tournament by placing second at German Nationals with a monored "Bridge-Skullcap" deck, which also loses next to nothing from the rotation of *Invasion* block and the effectiveness of which ought not to be discounted, particularly in the early weeks of the new Standard environment when players are most likely to experiment with rogue designs.

Interestingly enough, the answer to all of these problems can be found waiting quietly in *Onslaught.* Naturalize, functionally identical to Disenchant except for its mana cost of 1 🌳, provides both this and other green decks with something they've generally lacked: efficient and versatile permanent removal. While cards like Emerald Charm and Uktabi Orangutan are some of the best answers to enchantments and artifacts, they are quite narrow in their application. To find versatility in green you have to go significantly up the mana curve, with cards like Creeping Mold and Desert Twister seeing play solely on the back of green's copious mana production capabilities. For decks less bent toward abusing that particular mechanic—like this one—Naturalize fills a role previously left vacant.

With Flametongue Kavu gone, creature-based decks similar to this one in basic strategy will likely grow significantly in prominence. With that in mind, given that Unnatural Selection is no longer available, some method of dealing with the rush of opposing Mongrels and Wurms will become increasingly important. *Odyssey* Block Constructed has shown that Krosan Reclamation for opposing Wonders and Æther Burst for opposing creatures is an effective strategy for the mirror match, so these cards join the rest of the answers in the sideboard. Quiet Speculation remains attractive in the board, giving the deck a quick and easy way to produce a massive number of Wurms against decks lacking removal for them, while Phantom Centaur will likely find a place against opposing Braids decks, as both Repulse and Fire/Ice, the most common ways of dealing with the Minion Legend at instant speed, are no more.

With efficent threats, card advantage capability, countermagic, and—thanks to Naturalize—effective answers to a wide variety of threats, Wonder Dog stands to be a fierce competitor in the new Standard environment. Most of its foes from *Invasion* block are long gone, and their *Seventh Edition* counterparts are now well under control. Expect to see flying Hounds and Wurms at the top tables of tournaments near you.

Blue-Green Madness

- Post-Onslaught -

3	Aquamoeba
4	Arrogant Wurm
4	Basking Rootwalla
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Wild Mongrel
4	Wonder
4	Careful Study
4	Circular Logic
2	Deep Analysis
4	Roar of the Wurm
2	Centaur Garden
2	City of Brass
8	Forest
11	Island

sideboard

4	Æther Burst
2	Krosan Reclamation
2	Naturalize
2	Phantom Centaur
2	Quiet Speculation
3	Stupefying Touch

The Invasion is Over

It's a Whole New Standard

by Ben Rubin

With the coming of *Onslaught* and the subsequent exodus of *Invasion* block, there will be some important changes in Standard. To begin considering what these changes might be, it's important to note which cards will be leaving. Although there are many, without a doubt the ones whose impact will be most strongly felt will be Flametongue Kavu and Fact or Fiction. Since it first hit the tournament scene, Fact or Fiction has been an efficient and convenient way for control decks to gain card advantage without tapping out on their own turn. In addition, Fact or Fiction does a great job putting cards into the graveyard, making flashback cards like Call of the Herd and Deep Analysis that much more likely to affect the game. Furthermore, gaining threshold for cards like Nantuko Monastery, Werebear, and Mystic Enforcer became extremely easy. Perhaps most obviously, its synergy with Psychatog earned Fact or Fiction the moniker "Might of Fiction," for its ability to grant a minimum +6/+6 to its signature creature.

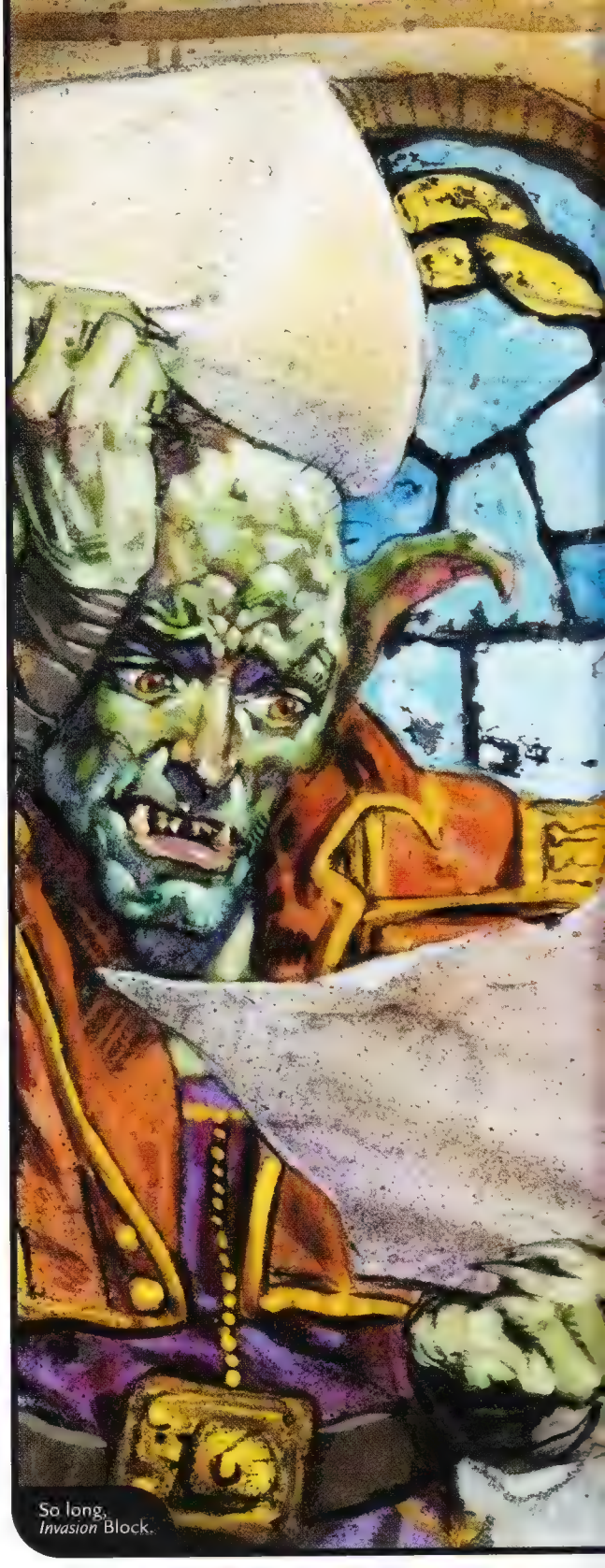
While Fact or Fiction was, for the most part, a defense-oriented, reactive spell, Flametongue Kavu was its polar opposite. Flametongue gave aggressive decks creature removal and an added damage source and gave control decks a way to trade one card for two opposing threats, all wrapped up in a cheap package. Creatures such as Serra Angel and Sengir Vampire were made all but obsolete in Standard, with their relatively high mana costs and mere 4 toughness (remember when that was a lot of toughness?). After its release, many predicted that Fact or Fiction would be splashed into many non-blue decks, but it turned out that Flametongue Kavu was the more popular one to engineer into decks that were otherwise less interested in the ways of the mountains, giving blue-green Opposition decks much-needed creature control and giving green-white decks an additional way to get ahead of the opponent with the help of mana accelerating creatures. The 'Tongue even made its way into many successful Psychatog designs, showing that what looked like an obviously blue and black deck could benefit from including red.

While Fact or Fiction and Flametongue Kavu are the two most important cards to be lost in the upcoming Standard rotation, they are by no means the end of the list. A good number of format-defining cards that provide the backbone from some of today's most popular and powerful Standard decks are also on the proverbial chopping block. Noteworthy cards include Repulse ("Miss America", Psychatog), Fire/Ice (Psychatog variants, blue-green-red Opposition, red-green), Disrupt (various blue strategies), Nightscape Familiar (Psychatog), Phyrexian Arena (monoblack control), Meddling Mage (Psychatog, "Enforcer-Go"), Urza's Rage (Miss America, red-green, Psychatog variants), Goblin Trenches (Miss America), Addle (monoblack control), Skizzik (red-green), Wax/Wane ("Red Zone 2K2"), Gainsay (various blue strategies), Shivan Wurm (red-green), Prophetic Bolt (Miss America), Armadillo Cloak (Red Zone 2K2), Lightning Angel (Miss America), Spiritmonger (various rogue designs), Pernicious Deed (Psychatog variants), Lobotomy (Psychatog), and Probe (Psychatog).

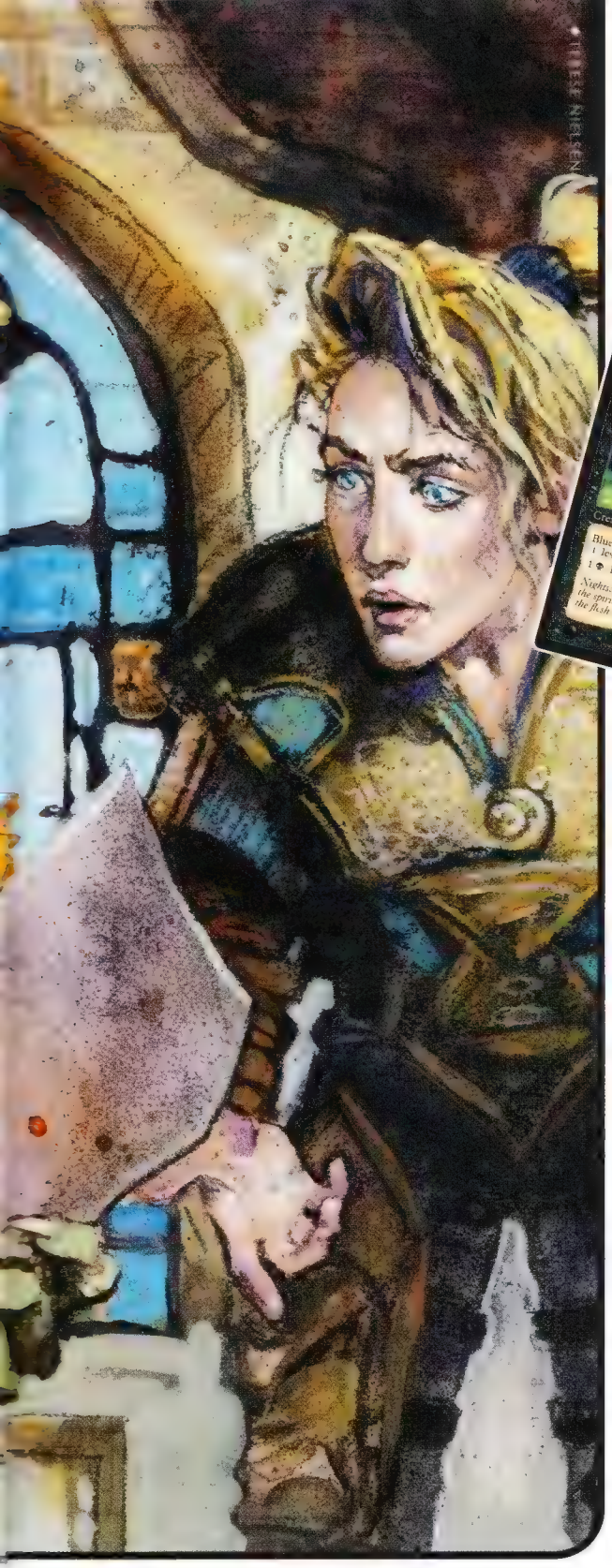
While the loss of these spells is debilitating, the rotating out of the lands in the *Invasion* block might be crippling to many potent strategies. Without such multicolor enablers as Salt Marsh, Urborg Volcano, Coastal Tower, Yavimaya Coast, Shivan Reef, and Llanowar Wastes, many decks will be forced to turn to the filter lands from the *Odyssey* block, City of Brass from *Seventh Edition*, or the fetch lands from the upcoming *Onslaught* set. Birds of Paradise will be all the more critical in not only giving decks a speed boost but also providing access to all colors of mana. The end result of the loss of these lands, however, may simply be that decks will be forced to narrow their focus from 3- or 4-color mana bases to monocolored and two-colored ones. In addition, the easy alliance of unfriendly colors that had become so common may now have to take a step back to where it was—meaning we will only see green-white-black or blue-red-green on special occasions.

So, with this list, including Fact or Fiction and Flametongue Kavu, we can determine the fate of several important decks in Standard. Virtually the entire decklist of Miss America is stripped bare, which does not bode well for a deck not played at Worlds and which had its heyday in spring of 2002. Blue-green decks, both with Opposition and without, lose both of their time-honored ways of dealing with opposing Merfolk Looters and mana creatures. It remains to be seen if the blue-green builds of the future are willing to play such lesser creature removal spells as Firebolt or Volcanic Hammer, but it seems unlikely. The attraction of Fire/Ice and Flametongue was not only that they removed creatures, but also that they did so efficiently and in ways that were synergistic with the aims of their respective decks. However, this loss is certainly a double edged sword; though it may be harder to kill a creature, these decks that work with mana creatures and Looters will now have to worry a lot less about the fates of their creatures. So, don't be fooled by the loss of these powerful spells. Blue-green may remain a dominant force, as indicated by its success in *Odyssey* Block Constructed at Pro Tour–Osaka and the World Championships.

Red Zone 2K2 remains similarly intact. Only the split cards Wax/Wane and Fire/Ice (representing two and three slots, respectively), along with the ubiquitous Flametongue Kavu, depart. While red-green-white decks in their current form may fall by the wayside, it's a sure



So long, *Invasion* Block.



Nightscape Familiar
Creature — Zombie
Blue spells and red spells you play cost 1 less to play.
1: Regenerate Nightscape Familiar.
Nightscape masters don't stop at raising the spirit of a fallen battlemage. They raise the flesh along with it.
Illus. Jeff Easley
1/1

When Flametongue Kavu comes into play, it deals 4 damage to target creature.
"For dim-witted, thick-skulled genetic mutants, they have pretty good aim."
—Sisay
4/2

bet that there will be ample room available for the potent combination of Anurid Brushhopper, Glory, Wild Mongrel, Call of the Herd, and Phantom Centaur.

A discussion of pertinent decks in Standard would not be complete without mentioning the toothy-grinned Atog and friends. Those who have tired of Psychatog's reign atop the Standard environment should be encouraged to hear that even though his army remains viable, his competition will have a much easier time then before. The losses of Repulse (potentially offset by the use of Æther Burst) and Salt Marsh (replaced by lesser dual lands such as Underground River and Darkwater Catacombs) are damaging, but without a doubt one of the most important cards in Psychatog is Nightscape Familiar. Without the much-needed speed boost given by the Familiar, the tempo-advantage game so often employed by Psychatog decks is no longer an option. Evidence of this is present wherever *Odyssey* block tournaments are held, where the seemingly potent combination of Psychatog, Circular Logic, Æther Burst, Standstill, Upheaval, and Chainer's Edict is easily defeated by blue-green and monoblack strategies.

Another way of looking at the impact of the departure of *Invasion* block is to discuss the various strategies that might be strengthened or possibly enabled due to the departure of various cards. As mentioned above, the twin 4/4 fliers from days of yore, Serra Angel and Sengir Vampire, are now viable options in the Standard environment. While they still might not stand up to the challenge of incoming Wild Mongrels and Wurm tokens, they at least have the opportunity to exist on the battlefield. Serra Angel could perhaps find a place as a high-end finisher in "White Weenie" decks, while Sengir Vampire, although outclassed by Laquatus's Champion and Nantuko Shade, might see some action from monoblack or black-X strategies. Blue-green Opposition decks no longer have to fear losing their key enchantment and giving up two cards to an opposing Teferi's Response, or losing any two of Birds of Paradise, Llanowar Elves, and Merfolk Looter to a split Fire/Ice. Sorcery and instant players alike can rejoice, as the often feared, if less often played, Disrupt is no longer present. Elephant, Beast, and Wurm tokens become all the more dangerous without the threat of a cantripped Repulse heading their way. And Shadowmage Infiltrator, which was initially one of the most anticipated cards of all time, though it quickly was eliminated from most Standard decks by the presence of Flametongue Kavu and Wild Mongrel, may now get to see some play after all.

The Kavu's exit, combined with several powerful black ways of dealing with opposing Wild Mongrels (by far the most likely creature to block our 1/3 friend), indicate a likely rebirth of blue-black aggro/control card-drawing strategies where Jon's card should find a happy home.

On further consideration, it seems that the mechanics of *Invasion* block, while highly innovative, rarely participated in the Standard environment. Kicker made for a somewhat interesting decision in Limited play (although kicker costs were almost always paid), but was almost entirely eschewed in Standard for other, more reliable options. Outside of Urza's Rage, Probe, Battlemages, and, debatably, Phyrexian Scuta and Dismantling Blow, kicker cards hardly saw the light of day. Split cards were also, for the most part, unused (notable exceptions being Fire/Ice and Wax/Wane, as mentioned above). *Onslaught* brings with it a host of new mechanics, including the much-awaited return of cycling and a brand new mechanic, morph.

Morph is unlikely to be a major force except maybe in Limited environments, mainly because a 2/2 creature for 3 is not only unremarkable but also vulnerable to most removal spells. The new incarnation of cycling, on the other hand, is at the same time versatile and intriguing. Cycling, as seen in the *Onslaught* set, gives flexibility not unlike that which kicker gave. A card that isn't currently useful can be traded in for a small mana cost, meaning that a deck's versatility can be improved without the need for inflexible cards that might clog up your hand when you don't have the mana or need for them. In addition, some of the new cycling cards involve effects that can be used when a card is cycled (meaning that these alternate uses of the cards can't even be countered). Solar Blast can have the same effect as Lightning Bolt or Zap, and Complicate the same as Mana Leak or Force Void.

Of course, the excitement in the changing environment is not in the nostalgic look back at past stars, but in evaluating how the new cards will become relevant to us.

Above all other white cards, Convalescent Care seems to have the most promise. A card that provides the opportunity for a card draw every turn in addition to life gain is probably powerful enough to merit its own deck. Akroma's Vengeance, while rather obviously not possessing any great synergy with Convalescent Care, is a great reset button for blue-white control decks, which, conveniently enough, can cycle it if time is running short.

Complicate is what my more eccentric friends might call the sexiest of the new cycling cards, as a fairly reliable counter that can also teach the opponent a lesson about tapping out. Quicksilver Dragon, harkening back to the days of Silver Wyvern, will likely duel Iridescent Angel as the hard-to-kill win condition for blue-white control builds. However, the star of the new set in the blue department could certainly be Future Sight. With its Temporal Aperture–esque effect, Future Sight allows a deck with minimally costed spells to advance quickly through its library, gaining massive card advantage. As demonstrated (hopefully successfully) later in this article, this is a strategy that has promise for Standard.

Black draws the point-removal "stars" from the *Onslaught* card pool. First and foremost in this category is Smother. Speed and versatility are obviously important aspects of removal spells, and Smother possesses plenty of both. A typical blue-green deck contains some or all of the following: Birds of Paradise, Merfolk Looters, Llanowar Elves, Wurm tokens, Wild Mongrel, Basking Rootwalla, Aquamœba, Werebear, and Elephant tokens—all of which are dispatched easily with Smother. Death Pulse, while a bit more expensive, could find a home in black control decks, as it can be used equally effectively to remove a 4 toughness monster or a 1 toughness mana creature while gaining a card.

Black was also lucky enough to receive three creatures that seem viable in Standard. Wretched Anurid, considering its 3/3ness in relation to its 1 mana cost, is excellent against decks that cannot punish you for the hit your life total will take from his drawback. Grinning Demon, similarly, is way overpowered for his mana cost, as long as your opponent isn't going to take advantage of your life total dropping so quickly. Do these new creatures mean a return to "Suicide Black"? I doubt it, but each certainly seems worth consideration if black decks ever need huge monsters that only come with the price of making staying alive a bit more complicated. On a cheerier note for potential controllers of these creatures, there is Visara, the Dreadful. A cost of 3 for a 5/5 flier, *and* it can tap to destroy a creature every turn, eh? Gonna be fun to play against in Limited, but will its high mana cost make it hard to use in Constructed? It's hard to say, but with the exit of Recoil, Repulse, and the less-played Vindicate and Hobble, I won't be surprised if this card takes over at least where Spiritmonger left off.

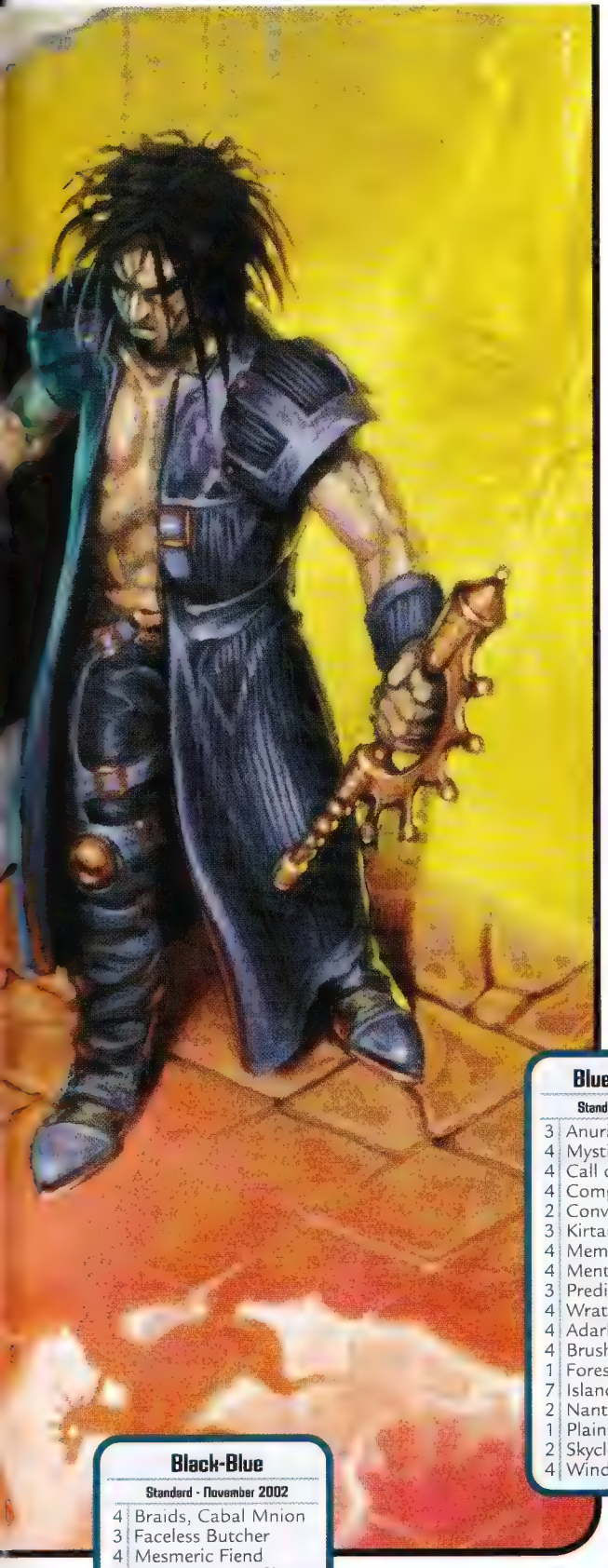
Red's usual standouts—burn spells, haste creatures, and Goblins—are here in force. Solar Blast is similar to Death Pulse in that it offers an opportunity for card advantage with the added bonus of being able to be traded in (with an uncounterable point of damage) when facing a control deck. Blistering Firecat is probably more in the vein of "The New Ball Lightning" than Skizzik ever was. At 5/3, Skizzik provided not only a hastened 5 points of damage, but also a sturdy enough body to present a problem to the opponent on future turns. The Firecat, on the other hand, will more likely hit hard for 7 on its first attack and then go straight to the graveyard, perhaps making it more worthy of play than its 5/3 predecessor. In addition, Goblin Taskmaster could provide the extra push that an ultra-aggressive Goblin deck needs to become a major player in the next Standard format.

Green features a full slate of enormous creatures, utility spells, and enchantments, and even a game-ending sorcery. While "instant victory" isn't a phrase that usually brings green spells to mind, Biorhythm can provide exactly that. Aside from the fact that it's really only useful against decks whose boards can be swept of creatures easily—decks that, unfortunately, tend to run a good number of counterspells—Biorhythm should end the game immediately more often than not, though it's certainly slow. However, with the impressive number of mana accelerators available to green, don't be surprised if this card shows up in a tournament-worthy deck. As always, green is blessed with a host of versatile creatures, such as Hystrodon (possibly the most powerful morph spell in the set) and Gigapede, a nightmare for counter-heavy control decks. Enchantress's Presence is much like Argothian Enchantress in that it is pseudo-untargettable (due to a decided lack of enchantment removal in most decks) and is even immune to such non-targeted removal as Earthquake and Chainer's Edict. While the support cards are not as powerful as when John Hunka piloted an Enchantress deck to the Top 4 of U.S. Nationals, a strategy could easily be employed which uses the Presence to draw cards from other powerful enchantments (Wild Growth, Opposition, and Future Sight come to mind immediately).

Finally, even the lands from *Onslaught* are worth considering. It appears that someone thought that the *Mirage* fetch lands weren't good enough, because now they come into play *un*tapped, costing 1 life to use instead. These new versions seem quite good—better than pain lands in many decks. Grand Coliseum also seems quite playable, meaning that you can get mana of any color that you want a few times without having to take damage each and every time you tap it. Whether its ability to produce colorless and pain-free mana will be enough to make it better than City of Brass is unclear. There is also a new generation of lands with abilities, but none of them seem worthy of Constructed use.

So, which new decks become viable? Alongside which old-timers will the new power cards make their presence felt? One of the first designs that came to my mind was a black-blue control build with Braids, Cabal Minion and Future Sight.

Braids, Cabal Minion
Creature — Minion, Legend
At the beginning of each player's upkeep, that player sacrifices an artifact, creature, or land
3/2
Chainer's Edict
Sorcery
Target player sacrifices a creature.
Flashback
Smother
Instant
Destroy target creature with converted mana cost 3 or less. It can't be regenerated.



Black-Blue
Standard - November 2002

4	Braids, Cabal Mnion
3	Faceless Butcher
4	Mesmeric Fiend
4	Shadowmage Infiltrator
4	Chainer's Edict
4	Darkwater Egg
4	Duress
3	Future Sight
2	Sky Diamond
4	Smother
9	Island
11	Swamp
4	Underground River

Blue-White-Green
Standard - November 2002

3	Anurid Brushhopper
4	Mystic Enforcer
4	Call of the Herd
4	Complicate
2	Convalescent Care
3	Kirtar's Desire
4	Memory Lapse
4	Mental Note
3	Predict
4	Wrath of God
4	Adarkar Wastes
4	Brushland
1	Forest
7	Island
2	Nantuko Monastery
1	Plains
2	Skycloud Expanse
4	Windswept Heath

The goal with this deck is to take control early and never look back once Infiltrator or Future Sight starts working and refueling you with more ways to disrupt your opponent. Few game plans should stay intact in the face of eight discard spells, eleven ways to kill creatures, and good old Braids.

It's important to realize just how good Smother is in this deck, particularly because it kills just about every creature that blocks Shadowmage Infiltrator—other Infiltrators, Mongrels, and Psychatogs. Smother is also an excellent answer to a Wurm token (or any token for that matter), if you don't have the means to play a Faceless Butcher. So, while you might have doubts because this sort of deck hasn't had much success in Standard previously, remember Smother!

On the other hand, it's not entirely clear *how* good Future Sight will be—if you ask me, it might just be *too* good. In R&D's Future Future League, Future Sight was a powerhouse during testing and served as a key card in blue-heavy decks. Card manipulation has always been an unknown quantity. Some card manipulation spells end up being much more powerful than originally thought, such as Deep Analysis. Future Sight has the potential to be the most popular blue card in Standard. Even given the power level this deck makes a pretty big sacrifice to include Future Sight, playing lots of blue mana when the only other blue card is Infiltrator, who would otherwise be an easy splash. It's possible that blue should be reduced in this way and that Nantuko Shade should be added to take advantage of heavy black mana, but it seems more likely that the power of Future Sight will be sufficient that it's not even worth comparing to Nantuko Shade.

After all, it means that every turn you will almost certainly get to play a land and play a spell, maybe two, all without using any cards from your hand! In all seriousness, it seems like the card should read "Skip your draw phase," but my friends at Wizards assure me that it doesn't. Only time will tell for this card, although I'm sure we will hear more on this from Zvi before long.

A second design that seems particularly good in the Standard is a blue-white-green deck with Convalescent Care and Wrath of God.

The goals of this deck are a bit more complicated than those of the previous. Whereas with most decks you want to deploy as quickly as possible, with this deck you get to use Wrath of God. Interestingly, Wrath of God has seen next to no use since the printing of *Odyssey* (perhaps some of you may remember Brian Kibler's blue-white-green Mystic Enforcer deck that a few of us played in the San Diego Masters), a phenomenon that's difficult to explain, except to say that perhaps there have been better control cards and strategies available. Crucially, these other control designs were particularly good against decks sporting Wrath of God, with the flexibility to play excellent anti-control cards like Upheaval, Deep Analysis, and Nightscape Familiar because they were not committed to the ✱✱ in Wrath's mana cost. What changes? Well, Psychatog without Repulse, Nightscape Familiar, and Fact or Fiction just won't be the same. And, while it may still be excellent against this deck, the fact that Psychatog will be less played is reason enough to start taking other kinds of control decks more seriously.

For a control deck, this collection of cards can come out pretty aggressively, especially once it gets threshold and can let the 6/6 fliers do their thing. The trick to playing this deck is knowing when to be on offense and when to be on defense. When to commit Enforcer and when to wait to Wrath. Which spells to counter and which to let through. In general, I think one should be aggressive when playing this deck, generally attempting to win quickly unless there is good reason not to (such as your opponent committing too many creatures to the table). Also, you must remember that this deck has no hard counters, so playing long term defense can be risky.

If you're looking for a deck that can play defense or offense, punish a mana light draw, or recover from one of its own with a single Wrath of God, this may be the deck for you. What are its strengths? Mystic Enforcer is quite strong now that Repulse is gone, though Chainer's Edict is still a nuisance. Anurid Brushhopper is obviously very strong, and Call of the Herd is perhaps equally resilient, especially with Recoil joining Repulse in leaving the format. With other utility spells, as well as Convalescent Care to provide late game card economy or life gain (be prepared to mana burn), this deck seems flexible but powerful enough to do some serious damage in Standard.

The rest of the format will include some green-blue aggressive decks, not unlike the *Odyssey* Block Constructed (OBC) decks we saw at Worlds. In fact, it's possible that with the exception of Merfolk Looter and maybe City of Brass, such decks will be entirely composed of *Odyssey* block cards! This is a testament to how powerful the *Odyssey* block's pool of cards is, and a reason not to be surprised if some of your Standard decks look strangely similar to your old OBC decks. As we know, OBC was filled with aggressive decks, with only monoblack as a common, dedicated control deck. So, it seems that Standard will be faster now that *Invasion* blocks's reactive cards have left, which means that it's time to spend less time on innovation and more time on efficiency. However, I think that both of the decks presented in this article at least give a start to somewhat different ideas on how to beat the aggressive creature decks without resorting to traditional methods. Good luck with this new format.

Deconstructing Onslaught

A First Impression of the New Limited

by Matt Vienneau

Ah, the thrill of a whole new set of **Magic** cards. Akin to the thrill of opening up a new booster pack when drafting, for a Limited player a new set is an exciting new world waiting to be explored. For the Constructed player, a new set of 350 cards is quickly reduced to about three dozen "impact" cards that might see the light of day in a "real" tournament. For the Limited player, on the other hand, there are at least three *hundred* cards that will see play, and that means months of exploration and good times.

The past few blocks have each had an overall theme that directly influenced Limited play. In *Odyssey* block, graveyard manipulation was at the forefront, while *Invasion* block was all about multi-color decks and card interactions. The theme for *Onslaught* is creature types, and it will be interesting to see how it plays out. Ever since I first laid eyes on Goblin King and Lord of Atlantis back in *Revised* I've been a fan of spells that care about a creature type. I still enjoy the look on my opponent's face when he or she says, "That's a Barbarian?" as my Halberdier or Pardic Arsonist uses the help of Balthor the Stout to deal more damage.

The effect on Limited play is likely to be subtle, unlike the last time creature types were important (the Rebels and Mercenaries in Masques block). Instead of just playing or drafting the best card, players will now have to check whether a slightly weaker card in the appropriate creature type is in the pack—much like including Pilgrim of Virtue in your deck because you also have Master Apothecary. Creatures with multiple creature types, such as Sage Aven, which is a Bird Wizard, will become slightly more powerful due to the increased chance of enhancement. This helps black the most, as almost every black creature is also a Zombie. One thing that can be learned from the color theme in *Invasion* block is that seemingly weak cards such as Imagecrafter, which taps to change creature type, are actually quite powerful. Blue benefits from having all the spells with that sort of effect in the set. Unlike *Invasion* block, however, where two people could draft red side by side because one was red-black and one was red-green, I don't foresee two players happily drafting white beside each other with one taking the Soldiers and the other the Clerics.

One area that the creature type theme will make very interesting is mirror matches. When two players share a color, all of their creature-type spells, such as Profane Prayer, which is a Drain Life–type effect equal to the number of Clerics in play, become doubly powerful. This may result in players killing off their own creatures so that their opponents' spells become less powerful, and it will definitely influence sideboarding decisions.

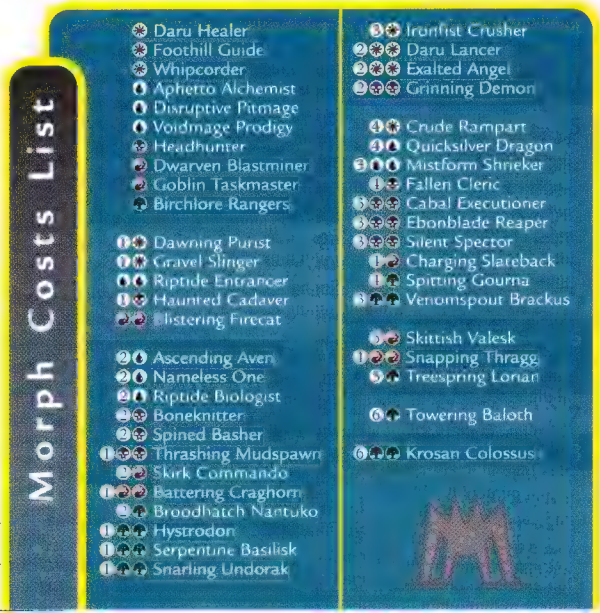
Along with a new theme, each block generally comes with a few new mechanics, like Flashback or Kicker. Let's take a look at the two "new" mechanics of the set:

CYCLING

Wizards has promised that one day they would bring a mechanic back, and they have finally done so. Cycling was last seen in the Urza block. It is a simple yet powerful mechanic that allows players to exchange cards that are not good at the moment for other cards that will hopefully be much better. Cycling reduces mana screw without reducing deck quality by allowing players to throw cards away in hopes of drawing lands. It also allows players to use more situational cards in their decks because they can always be tossed aside if they're not worth it. Land destruction is generally not good in Limited except in the very early game or if an opponent is splashing and has a single source of the color, but when land destruction comes with cycling, as Lay Waste does, all of a sudden it's worth considering as a starter card.

To make things even more interesting, cycling costs are no longer a uniform two generic mana. Sometimes there's a colored mana element, and sometimes cycling costs 1 or 3. Having cheaper cycling costs will help you get to your land when you need it at the beginning of the game, but this will likely be balanced by the more expensive cycling costs that make you wait until you've got enough mana available. The colored mana costs in cycling will counter one popular strategy from Urza block—splashing off-color cycling cards that you could throw away if you didn't have the correct mana in play.

A new twist has also been added to some cycling cards—cycling side effects. Even when you throw some cycling cards away you can still get minor effects out of them. This makes these cards very flexible and powerful, as you can use them to full effect when necessary, or turn them into cantrips if it will still do the job. Dirge of Dread will give all your creatures "fear" for a turn, but if you only have one creature in play, why not get the same effect for one less mana and also draw a card?



MORPH

This is a mechanic that will really keep players guessing. Its effect on Limited play is extremely difficult to measure, but I expect it will be driving everyone nuts for the first few weeks of the season. Do I block the 2/2 face-down morph creature with my 2/2 vanilla creature? Do I block it with my 2/2 morph creature? Do I block it with my 3/3? Do I let it through and risk having to discard three cards (Haunted Cadaver) or having two damage dealt to one of my creatures (Skirk Commando)?

One thing is for certain—if you want to win at the morph bluffing game, you'll quickly have to memorize the different morph costs and creatures so you know what may be coming at you. If your opponent is sitting back behind a face-down creature with 4 🌳 available, you may not want to attack with your flier into the potential 3/4 Spitting Gourna that can block as though it had flying. Even more skillfully, if your opponent has a 3/3 flier, you may want to sit back on 4 🌳 with a face-down creature in play just to bluff! Do you Shock a face-down morph creature in hopes that it's a 3/1 and not a 1/3, which would mean that you just threw your card away? The effect can even be subtler. If your opponent plays Wirewood Pride to give his creatures +X/+X, where X is equal to the number of Elves in play, and you confidently prevent 1 point of damage to save one of your creatures, your opponent could morph an Elf into play and still kill your guy.

Morph creatures come in a variety of types. Some are big creatures that you can play early and then morph into larger beasts as a surprise, such as the 5/4 Treespring Lorian. Others are smaller creatures that are very good in specific situations but are otherwise better off as generic 2/2's, such as the 1/2 Riptide Biologist that has protection from Beasts. A third subset of morph creatures is made up of creatures with special abilities that can surprise your opponent, such as the aforementioned Haunted Cadaver or the Gravel Slinger that can be turned face up to deal 1 damage to an attacking or blocking creature.

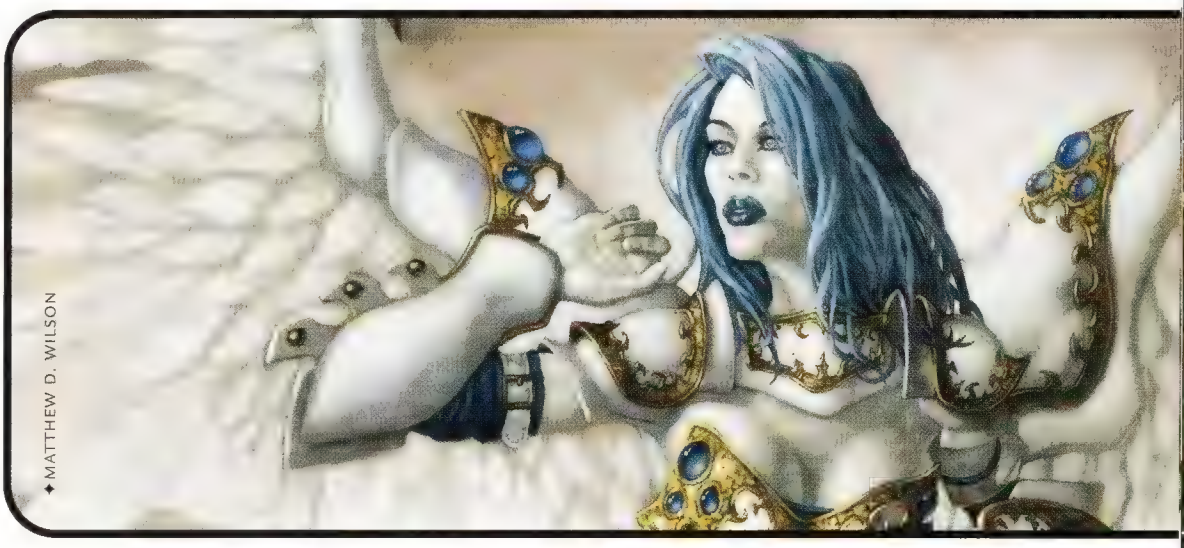
With all these options, morph will definitely help out the skilled player who knows the cards and what to expect. Do you play the creature normally, or do you spend a little extra and try to catch your opponent on something? Bluffing has returned to **Magic** in a big way and I foresee many stories emerging about games being won or lost on surprise morphs. Unlike threshold or Rebels, the morph mechanic is spread evenly through the colors, so everyone gets to participate. The ability to affect morph creatures by flipping them over is very limited, so there won't be a lot of "peeking", but that may make those few "peek" cards very valuable.

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ASKING

At the beginning of every new Limited environment, it's worthwhile to go through a couple of key questions before you begin playing in tournaments and see if it influences how you draft or build your deck. In Urza block it was worthwhile to play with main deck enchantment removal, and in *Invasion* it was a good idea to start anti-black cards. Let's go through a couple of the key questions and see if they can help in our earlier tournaments.

Be forewarned—Limited is all about the common and, to a lesser extent, the uncommon cards. While matches will often be won or lost on the rare bombs that are drawn, in the Limited world the commons are the most important cards. They are what will consistently appear in everyone's deck, and they define the tempo and nature of the environment. If there are multiple common 2/2s for two mana, then it will be a fast environment like *Invasion* block. If there are lots of four-mana 2/3 creatures, games will take on a more leisurely pace. Therefore, the emphasis in this article and the generalities mentioned do not include rares, which by their very nature are not as likely to show up and because of that can break the rules a bit more than other cards.

Let's start with the easy questions and progressively get more complex:



✦ MATTHEW D. WILSON

Will I need artifact kill?
There are only six artifacts in the set and they're all rare, so all your artifact destruction should stay in the sideboard or not be drafted at all. Some of the set's artifacts, such as the token-generating Riptide Replicator, can be powerful in the late game, but even so, the odds of encountering one in a tournament are extremely low, so it's not worth worrying about.

Will I need enchantment removal?
There are fewer than ten playable common enchantments in *Onslaught,* and all of them are creature enchantments that can often be "disenchanted" by removing the creature instead. Most importantly for sideboard considerations, there aren't any Circles of Protection or other color hosers that you'll need to get rid of. There are a few uncommon enchantments, but not enough to really worry you, although some—such as Centaur Glade, which creates 3/3 Centaur tokens for 2 {G}{G}—could be troublesome. There are quite a number of rare enchantments, and some of them look very troublesome, such as Words of War, which allows its controller to exchange any draw for 2 points of damage to target creature or player, so while enchantment kill is never worth starting, it's not a horrible idea to have it in the sideboard.

Will I need land destruction?
In the past there have been land enchantments, such as Squirrel Nest and Caustic Tar, or land itself, such as Keldon Necropolis, that had players late-picking land destruction and hoping they would never need it. There are three enchant lands in *Onslaught,* but none of them are too game-altering. However, there are five uncommon and three rare lands with special abilities that you may want to get rid of with a properly targeted Lay Waste. Black doesn't have any common land destruction for the first time, but blue can steal lands with Annex or turn them into islands with Sea's Claim, while green can start a Chain of Acid to destroy a land, although it will likely cost the green player a land as well.

Is regeneration prevalent?
In an environment with lots of Drudge Skeletons, evasion becomes much more important. If there are even bigger regenerating creatures, you suddenly need blockers of your own with high toughness, or you need to be playing black. *Onslaught* has no worries in this area, with Boneknitter, a morph creature that can regenerate any Zombie, as its only source of permanent, non-rare regeneration.

Is this a "fast" set?
It seems that every set seems very slow at first, but as players get more experienced with it they find ways to speed up the tempo. I expect *Onslaught* to

The Top 5 Commons for White

1 ✱✱
Flying
Whenever Gustcloak Harrier becomes blocked, you may untap it and remove it from combat.
Banking steeply, the raven streaked toward the ground and vanished.
2/1

3 ✱
Flying
{B}, Sacrifice Dive Bomber: Dive Bomber deals 2 damage to target attacking or blocking creature.
"Your graves will lie beneath my final nest."
2/2

2 ✱
{W}: Prevent the next 1 damage that would be dealt to target creature or player this turn.
Morph ✱ (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
1/4

3 ✱
{W} Gravel Slinger deals 1 damage to target attacking or blocking creature.
Morph 1 ✱ (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
1/3

be no different, as at first look it does not appear to be very fast. Lots of expensive and over-priced creatures with little kill, bounce, or creature enhancement tends to result in a slow build-up of ground creatures that lasts until the winner draws bombs or evasion. The "basic creature" of the past has always been the 2/2 for three mana Gray Ogre, so anything better than that was good and contributed to tempo. Now that the 2/2 for three mana has been formalized as the morph standard, though, there are few cards that are better for less. This means that deckbuilders won't have to worry about playing substandard early creatures just to stop the rush and will be able concentrate on using the best cards they have available.

Is there a lot of evasion, or will blocking be prevalent?
Evasion was a significant issue in *Tempest* block due to shadow, and in more recent years its primary manifestation has been flying. Evasion is only worth mentioning here due to the prevalence of "fear"-type effects and the lack of cheap green anti-flying spells. With almost no artifacts in the set, fear is very powerful ability outside of the mirror. With little ability to deal with fliers, green players will have to make sure their second color can handle them.

Are there a lot of combat tricks, and how much do they cost?
If the environment has Explosive Growth, Wax/Wane, and Aggressive Urge like *Invasion* did, then you have to be careful in every combat situation. Normally restricted to green and white (with such cards as Guided Strike and Shelter), combat tricks in an environment mean having to memorize what they are, how much they cost, and how much it will cost you if your opponent is holding them. In *Onslaught,* it appears that the combat trickiness of morph has made other tricks unnecessary, with very few common instants that have an effect on combat. The few common tricks that do exist involve on-board creature types such as Elves (Wirewood Savage) and Soldiers (Piety Charm) and can be prepared for if you know to watch for them. There are some powerful uncommon tricks, such as Inspirit, which untaps a creature and gives it +2/+4, but generally if your opponent's creatures are face-up, then you can attack pretty safely.

Is "splashing" spells of another color easy?
Splashing a color—tossing in a few powerful cards of an extra color—is made possible by two things: powerful spells that have a single colored mana requirement in their mana costs and cards that make it easy to generate different-colored mana.

Determining whether or not the former is true is difficult. The incredibly broken rare bombs almost universally have triple colored-mana requirements and are impossible to splash. But common and uncommon cards tend to have just a single colored mana in their mana costs, making it a bit easier to splash some red burn or a big green creature. Morph makes for easier splashing, as you can always play a morph card as a face-down 2/2 if you don't have the colored mana available. Similarly, cycling has the same effect if it has a generic mana cost. I can definitely see myself splashing Barkhide Mauler (4/4 for 4 with a cycling cost of 2) or Treespring Lorian (5/4 with morph for 5) if I need something big on the ground.

The ability to get to your third color is not as easy in *Onslaught* as it has been in the past. There are five rare lands that allow a player to pay a life and sacrifice one to fetch either of two allied basic lands, and they will certainly help a little, but being rare they can't be depended on. Even green, traditionally very strong in this area, has only Birchlore Ranger to help provide colored mana, and you need another Elf in play to do it. Cycling will allow players to go through their decks faster in search of their splash colors, but overall it doesn't seem easy to get to that one land you really need.

Is there a lot of quality creature kill or recurring creature kill in the set?
Cards such as Magma Burst and Pestilence have dominated their environments in the past, so it's important to know what's out there and be ready for it when it appears (if you can't get it for yourself). In *Onslaught,* the overall level of creature kill seems down from earlier sets, and there is almost no mass creature kill. Except against a red mage, most of your creatures are pretty safe as long as they stay out of combat.

The Top 5 Commons for Blue

Flying
Ascending Aven may block only creatures with flying.
Morph 2 (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)

Flying
1: Mistform Dreamer's type becomes the creature type of your choice until end of turn
Devotion, the second myth of reality. The faithful are most hurt by the object of their faith

(Walls can't attack.)
1: Mistform Wall's type becomes the creature type of your choice until end of turn.
Fellowship, the fourth myth of reality: As the tides of war shift, so do loyalties

Slipstream Eel can't attack unless defending player controls an island.
Cycling 1 (1, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
"It's a fine way to travel, if you don't mind the smell."

Flying
When Sage Aven comes into play, look at the top four cards of your library, then put them back in any order
From their mountain aeries, aven scholars see far more than the distant horizon.

Recurring kill, generally in the form of "pingers" such as Prodigal Sorcerer or enchantments such as Psionic Gift, is very important in the Limited environment. If a set has multiple common pingers, such as *Tempest*'s Rootwater Hunter and Fireslinger, then 1 toughness creatures decrease markedly in value as they just don't survive very long. There are a few pingers and pinger-like effects in *Onslaught*, but they're all in red—Lavamancer's Skill, Sparksmith, and the uncommon Embermage Goblin. This means that you can safetly draft and play 1/1 creatures without them costing you card advantage.

Another type of pinger is the traditionally white "deal damage to target attacking or blocking creature", best exemplified by Heavy Ballista and Crossbow Infantry in *Seventh Edition* but rarely seen elsewhere in the past few years. That ability has appeared again in *Onslaught* on commons Gravel Slinger and Dive Bomber along with the uncommon Catapult Squad. With so little kill in the set, that sort of card is much better than it has been in the past.

Are there lots of ways of gaining card advantage?

Due to the slower nature of Limited and lack of tempo victories, in Limited it almost always comes down to card advantage. This is true even to the point that it is better to play second in Sealed Deck because you'll get that extra card. In *Odyssey* block there are many cards, such as Deep Analysis, Aven Cloudchaser, and all the flashback cards, that provide easy card advantage. Masques block, on the other hand, was a difficult environment in which to gain any sort of card advantage, because the activated abilities of the Spellshapers all involved discarding. So in *Odyssey* block a card like Inspiration would not be very good, especially when compared to Concentrate or Deep Analysis, but in Masques it may well have been a card everyone played main deck just to get a bit of a lead in the card advantage race.

Onslaught is a lot more like Masques than it is like *Odyssey*. Card advantage is very difficult to attain, with almost every effect being a one-for-one. There are no cantrips, and even blue, the king of card-drawing, has only a single common card-drawer, and even that depends on the number of Birds in play, while the main creature type for blue is Wizards. Card advantage can be gained, but it will have to be earned the hard way through morph combat tricks and minor cycling side effects. The one exception to this is red's recurring pinger abilities, making red one of the most sought-after colors—an active pinger will likely lead to card advantage before long.

RATING THE COLORS

It's hard to judge the strengths of different colors before playing a set extensively, but it's possible to bring away some first impressions based on past experience.

Black has always been a jack-of-all-trades, with access to kill, evasion, discard, fast creatures, and big creatures. Traditionally very strong in Limited, black has always been vulnerable to enchantments, artifacts, and the potent anti-black hate that shows up in every color but red and blue. With few significant enchantments and artifacts in *Onslaught*, there is nothing to worry about on that front. White has the pro-black Disciple of Grace, which is annoying but hardly devastating. Crown of Awe, with protection from both black and red, will be an issue, but it's hardly Phantom Centaur.

As mentioned above, fear has returned as a significant form of evasion for black, with several spells having the ability or granting it to creatures. This makes black a stronger color to play, all other things being equal, but the most significant evasion creature for black to worry about comes in its own color—the swampwalking 4/3, Anurid Murkdiver. Bog Wraith and, more recently, Whispering Shade are both significant threats to a black player, and the Murkdiver should prove no different, with black players drafting them early just to avoid facing them.

The one area where black is weaker is in killing creatures. With no cheap and efficient kill, black is lacking in a traditional strong area, but with the overall weaker kill in the set, black seems poised to dominate as it traditionally does in Limited.

Blue, on the other hand, seems to have taken hits on all sides. Without the traditional pinger or pinger enchantment, as well as lacking any form of cheap bounce, blue is left with almost no method of

The Top 5 Commons for Black

Cruel Revival
Instant
Destroy target non-Zombie creature. It can't be regenerated. Return up to one target Zombie card from your graveyard to your hand.
Few Cabal fighters fear death. They fear what follows it.
Illus. Greg Staples

Swat
Instant
Destroy target creature with power 2 or less.
Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
Few who cross Phage have the chance to repeat the mistake.
Illus. rk post

Haunted Cadaver
Creature — Zombie
Whenever Haunted Cadaver deals combat damage to a player, you may sacrifice it. If you do, that player discards three cards from his or her hand.
Morph 1 (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
Illus. Randy Gallegos
2/2

Screeching Buzzard
Creature — Bird
Flying
When Screeching Buzzard is put into a graveyard from play, each opponent discards a card from his or her hand.
Illus. Heather Hudson
2/2

Aphetto Dredging
Sorcery
Return up to three target creature cards of the creature type of your choice from your graveyard to your hand.
Phage became both executioner and savior, helping others to the same rebirth she had found.
Illus. Monte Michael Moore

board control except for a fairly weak "tap" mechanic that only seems effective in tempo decks. There are plenty of flying creatures, giving blue the traditional edge in evasion, as well as the giant Slipstream Eel that will hopefully hold things down on the ground while fliers get the job done.

Instead of the cheap and plentiful card drawing of past blue sets, *Onslaught* blue seems to be about looking deeper into your deck, with several methods of peering a couple cards in but none that allow you to keep one of those cards. Blue seems to be the color of changing creature types, which until now would have been regarded as nearly useless, but much like Tidal Visionary was initially under-rated in *Invasion* block, it may end up that this ability is very powerful. That seems to be the only bright spot in a color that has definitely seen better days.

Green is rarely a complicated color to analyze—does it have big cheap creatures or not? The answer here is no; there are lots and lots of big creatures, but they all cost five mana or more, except for a single common 3/3 "Hill Giant" for four mana. The 2/3 Elvish Warrior for {G}{G} is amazing for its cheapness and its ability to carelessly block morph creatures, but that is the only bright spot in an early game that has become used to Wild Mongrels and Phantom Tigers.

On the plus side, the big creatueres are really big and numerous. If the green mage can live long enough to start playing six- and seven-mana creatures, they will quickly dominate the board. Morph is another area where green will have an advantage in creature combat. Against most of the other colors, you can attack into a morph creature and there's a pretty good chance that it won't be much bigger than 3/2 and will still die to your 2/2. If your opponent has untapped forests behind his face-down creatures, though, you'd better think twice about attacking, since almost all green creatures with morph have a toughness of at least 4 when they are revealed. If morph proves to be more powerful than expected, green may do okay after all.

✦GREG STAPLES

Green lacks an early Giant Growth–type spell, with Wirewood Pride only being good once a few Elves are in play—something opponents will easily be able to track. There is also a distinct lack of ways to stop fliers, with no cheap "able to block as though it has flying" creatures or spells like Canopy Claws that confer that ability available. With plenty of fear-type effects around and green's inability to block fliers, green mages will quickly succumb to decks with evasion and will have to keep that in mind when picking their colors. To make matters worse, as mentioned above, green doesn't have easy access to other colors of mana, forcing it to strain under the same mana restrictions as the other colors when looking for solutions to its many problems.

Red has traditionally been strong in Limited because there is almost no price not worth paying for kill spells. While black removal spells seem weaker than usual, red has no shortage of direct damage and has all the pingers as a bonus. The red common creatures of most sets are usually weak Goblins, and *Onslaught* provides no exceptions, with a bunch of cheap 1/1 and 2/1 creatures. Red has suffered in the past from too much randomness—coin flips and random discards and so on—but not in *Onslaught*. Only Skittish Valesk uses coin flips, and there are no completely random discards or random effects at all. This enhanced certainty combined with good recurring and spot kill, including the cycling Solar Blast, makes red the best color in the set. I expect it will be heavily drafted and often splashed.

White's role in Limited is subtler than the other colors'. Outside of the aberrant Masques block, where Rebels dominated, white has traditionally done best with damage prevention and redirection cards like Coalition Honor Guard, Kor Chant, and Troubled Healer. *Onslaught* does not break that trend, as it has fairly generic healing with Daru Healer (an over-priced Samite Healer with morph) and Battlefield Medic, which will keep your creatures alive but won't keep *you* alive.

White's creatures are still small. The vanilla 2/2 Glory Seeker does not compare to green's Elvish Warrior. White is supposed to be the enchantment color, and it does get Pacifism back, which is strong with so little bounce, but compared to previous sets, it is very enchantment-light. It is also missing cheap Walls and high-toughness blockers for the early game. Perhaps because white is supposed to be more aggressive, the Walls have been put aside, but a color full of over-priced creatures and average damage prevention will have white mages praying to open some of the juicier uncommons, such as Whipcorder (a 2/2 tapper), Aven Soulgazer (a 3/3 flier that can look at face-down creatures), and Gustcloak Skirmisher (a 2/3 flier that you can remove from combat when it's blocked).

The Top 5 Commons for Red

Solar Blast deals 3 damage to target creature or player.
Cycling 1 {R} (1 {R}, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
When you cycle Solar Blast, you may have it deal 1 damage to target creature or player

Sparksmith
{T}: Sparksmith deals X damage to target creature and X damage to you, where X is the number of Goblins in play.
"If it didn't hurt, how would I know it worked?"
1/1

Shock deals 2 damage to target creature or player.
"I love lightning! It's my best invention since the rock."
—Toggo, goblin weaponsmith

Charging Slateback can't block.
Morph 4 {R} (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
Goblins prize its hide for building rock sled runners.

Enchanted creature has "{T}: This creature deals 1 damage to target creature."
If enchanted creature is a Wizard, it has "{T}: This creature deals 2 damage to target creature."

COLOR COMBINATIONS WHAT TO PLAY?

In the past, before the sets started mixing up the colors (like *Torment* and *Judgement*) or lending themselves to certain color combinations (like the entire *Invasion* block), it came down to always playing a color with kill. In *Odyssey*-only, this was mitigated by a lot of bounce that could function as kill, and every block since *Tempest* has had a blue pinger that allowed blue-white to prosper. But that is no longer true—there are no common blue bounce or pinger cards, and even the uncommon bounce spells such as Essence Fracture lack the power and speed of Æther Burst and Repulse. Recently strong combinations blue-white and blue-green, as well as perennial underdog green-white, are unlikely to be successful in *Onslaught*. All other combinations have a fair chance of doing well, but I feel some are more likely to succeed than others.

Black-White

Black seems obsessed with Zombies and Clerics, with spells that both harm players with Clerics and are helped by having Clerics in play. While black-white has not traditionally been a standard color combination in the past, several black spells of a variety of rarities, such as Cabal Archon (sacrifice a Cleric to Drain Life for 2), Profane Prayers, and Gangrenous Goliath (4/4, tap three Clerics to return to hand from graveyard) benefit greatly from having lots of Clerics in play. While there are eight black common and uncommon Clerics, there are another eleven of them in white. It may be a case of opening up a Cleric-positive card early and aiming for black-white, or it could be a situation where you draft black-white and hope the later packs reward you.

Green-Red

Green and red still go together, as they each have a love of Beasts. While Elves and Goblins are their preferred creatures respectively, there are still plenty of Beasts and spells that benefit from them to go around. The combination of lots of red kill and crappy creatures with green's big fat creatures but no early game or board control has always been a natural fit, and nothing has changed in *Onslaught*.

Blue-Red

This is all about one card—Lavamancer's Skill. This card is good on its own, but it's amazing when enchanting a Wizard, and blue has fourteen of them that are uncommon or common. With so few ways of getting card advantage and so much benefit to be gained from being able to keep doing two damage to all the face-down morph creatures, keeping Lavamancer's Skill in play on a Wizard will likely give anyone the victory.

creature, making Cabal Patriarch look like a wimp. Arcanis the Omnipotent allows you to Ancestral Recall every turn for free. Exalted Angel is a 4/5 flier that gains life for each damage it deals. Kamahl, Fist of Krosa not only can turn your lands into creatures to swarm your opponent but it also has an activated ability that mimics Overrun.

With the slower environment, players won't likely have a chance to win before their opponents can play their bombs. In Sealed Deck, it will be all about what you open and whether you can get the colored mana to pay for it, which is a bit disappointing. Perhaps land destruction will actually be useful, if only to deny an opponent the third source of a color that would allow him or her to dominate the game.

THE RARES

It would be irresponsible to write an article previewing *Onslaught* without at least one mention of the rare cards. Unfortunately, *Onslaught* contains a bunch of rares that are incredibly powerful in Limited. Having a large number of bombs in a set means that often, a player will do everything right yet still lose just because his or her opponent randomly drew his or her best card. Visara the Dreadful is a 5/5 flier that taps to destroy a

CONCLUSION

As always with articles of this nature, it is difficult to foresee what will actually happen in *Onslaught* Limited play before you draft or build a deck with it. The ideas and questions asked above are the standard things I go through to prepare for each new set as soon as it is released. I'm sure I will be wrong about at least one major thing, but that is what makes Limited play so exciting—it's hard to predict and it always changes. Have fun with it!

The Top 5 Commons for Green

Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand: Draw a card.)
Anywhere else they would be hunted for their skins, but in Wirewood, they are safe.

2: Target Beast gets +1/+1 until end of turn.
Morph 1 (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)
Most creatures in the Krosan Forest feared the Mirari's power. A few fed upon it.

Spitting Gourna
Creature Beast
Spitting Gourna may block as though it had flying.
Morph 4 (You may play this face down as a 2/2 creature for 3. Turn it face up any time for its morph cost.)

Krosan Tusker
Cycling 2 (2, Discard this card from your hand. Draw a card.)
When you cycle Krosan Tusker, you may search your library for a basic land card, reveal that card, and put it into your hand. Then shuffle your library.

Elvish Warrior
Creature Elf
"My tales of war are the stories most asked for around the fires at night, but they're the ones I care least to tell."

Mobilization

Two Cards, Two Abilities, Two Decks

by Mike Flores

TWO CARDS

Mobilization, as a white token-generating card, has an obvious predecessor: the legendary Kjeldoran Outpost. When Kjeldoran Outpost first appeared, it quickly established itself as the best finisher blue-white control decks had seen and one of the most dangerous cards for them to face. Before the introduction of Political Trickery and Wasteland, blue-white players had few ways to deal with an opposing Outpost. Worse yet, as a land, the Outpost was invulnerable to countermagic.

As a threat against blue-white control decks, Mobilization is inferior to Kjeldoran Outpost. It is a spell that hits play as an enchantment. If there is one thing that blue does better than any other color, it's countering dangerous spells; if there is one thing that white does better than any color, it's destroying enchantments. On its face, Mobilization is easier for a blue-white opponent to answer . . . but in every other regard, Mobilization may be superior.

Both Mobilization and Kjeldoran Outpost require a player to tap three lands to put a 1/1 creature into play. Unlike the original, however, a single Mobilization can produce more than one Soldier token each turn. With six mana, players can pump out two threats, with nine mana, they can have three, and so on.

The possibilities for card advantage that Mobilization provides are especially synergistic with blue-white's other defensive cards. While the proactive ability to create "free" creatures is obvious, Mobilization also strengthens a deck's ability to bleed an opponent out of threats. Because Mobilization can put a significant number of blockers into play, it forces the opponent to commit more and more resources to the board to get damage through. That means that every Wrath of God will take down multiple opposing creatures, while the defensive player will lose a couple of easily-replaced 1/1 Soldier tokens.

TWO ABILITIES

Though Mobilization's key ability is creature generation, we should not overlook the fact that with this enchantment in play, Soldiers do not tap to attack. For blue-white control decks, this adds the flavor of Serra Angel to Kjeldoran Outpost. That means that while a deck is churning out 1/1 defenders to block with, any remaining Soldiers can enter the Red Zone the next turn and still remain available for defensive duty.

While most of our discussion has focused on Mobilization in blue-white control decks, its "attacking doesn't cause Soldiers to tap" has great synergy with white creature decks. Not only does this ability benefit the Soldiers that Mobilization produces, but it also creates problematic board positions for your opponent in concert with other quality Soldiers. It's a difficult race when one player can attack with his creatures as well as defend with them, while the other player has to divide creatures between offense and defense.

Moreover, both abilities have great synergy with *Onslaught* cards like Catapult Squad and Catapult Master. Not only does Mobilization give a player the resources for these cards' abilities, it keeps even attacking Soldiers untapped and ready for use with them. Just sitting back on untapped Soldiers is a fairly obvious plan when using these cards, but Catapult Squad especially should catch more than one player unawares during combat. Just think of the possibilities. Your opponent is blocking a 1/1 Soldier with a much larger 3/3 creature, when all of a sudden, with damage on the stack, that creature and another Soldier now tap (they didn't have to tap to attack) . . . and the opponent loses a much more significant resource.

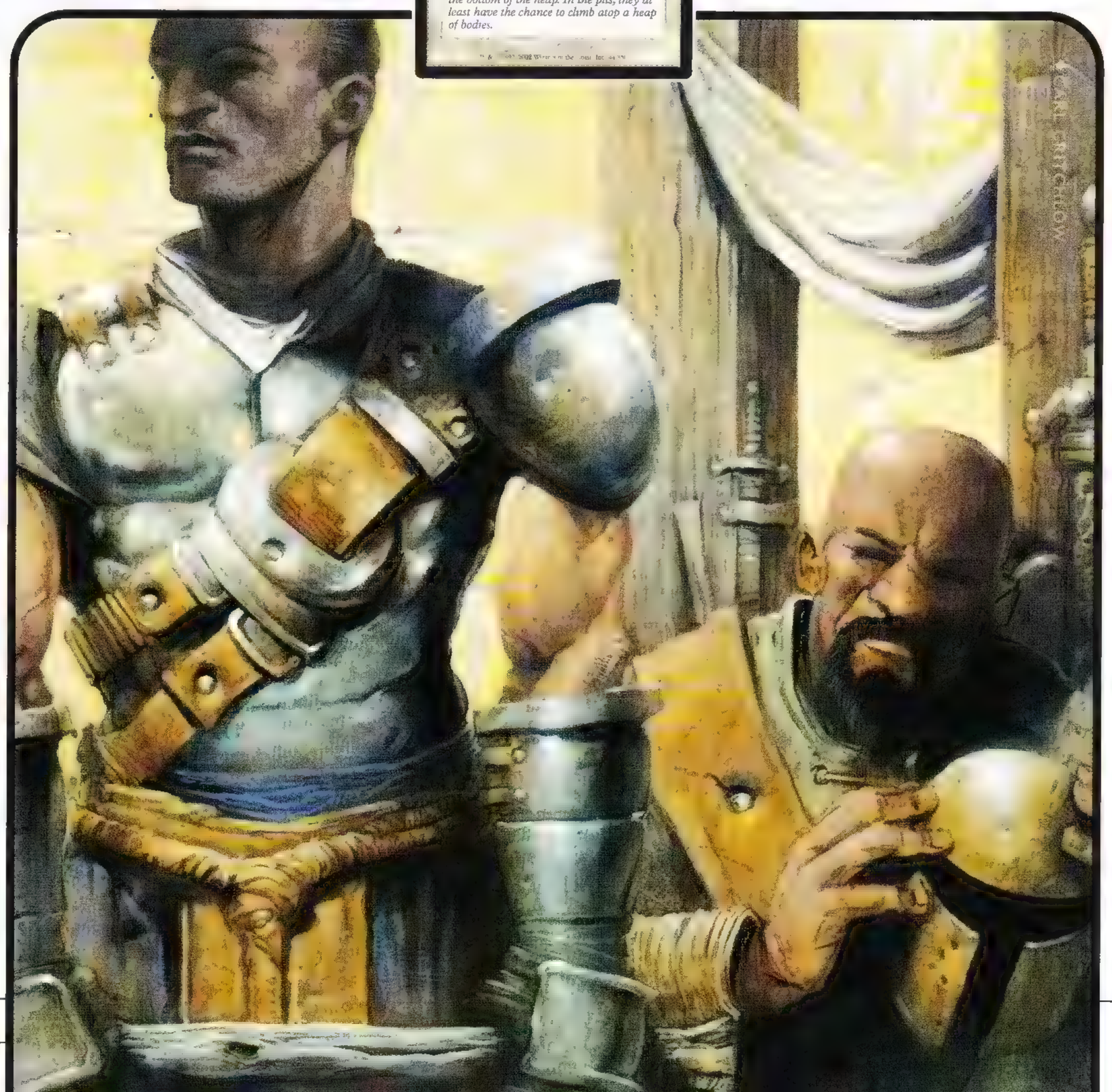
2
Attacking doesn't cause Soldiers to tap
2 Put a 1 1 white Soldier creature token into play
Newcomers to Otaria find themselves at the bottom of the heap. In the pits, they at least have the chance to climb atop a heap of bodies.

Another great play is to activate the Catapult Master's ability during combat, before blockers are declared. That way, more Soldier tokens may be able to get through the opposing defenses, all thanks to the "double duty" afforded by Mobilization's less-relevant ability. What do these tricks cost a player running Mobilization? His creatures simply have to tap during combat—which is almost no cost at all.

TWO DECKS

Both blue-white control and white creature decks will be bolstered by Mobilization. Blue-white will have an option that generates card advantage, serves as a finisher, blocks big creatures, and improves its other creature removal. White creature decks will see its existing Soldiers work harder and become more numerous. They will have a great answer against creature removal, allowing them to keep pace even after the first wave of attackers has been lost. Best yet, Mobilization is a legitimate mana dump that will give both decks something productive to do with late-game lands that might otherwise be useless draws.

Mobilization is a great card that rewards players for playing a significant amount of white mana. Many decks will be once again forced to play maindeck enchantment removal to defend against this powerful new card.



Ravenous Baloth

Erhnam Djinn Meets Spike Feeder

by Mike Flores

Ravenous Baloth is, in one word, efficient. Historically, large creatures that cost four mana have had significant drawbacks. Erhnam Djinn had a relevant drawback that could potentially cost its controller a ton of life each turn; Nettletooth Djinn, a card that saw Pro Tour play, caused Juzám Djinn-level headaches for its master; and for all its impressive abilities, the legendary Masticore had attached to it one of the heftiest price tags ever for a tournament-quality creature.

Unlike these predecessors, Ravenous Baloth is not only an efficient 4-power creature for four mana—it has no drawback at all. Instead, this new Beast has a powerful special ability that will reward green players in many ways.

First and foremost, Ravenous Baloth is one of the best racers we have seen in some time. A bane to red, this card is like a giant Spike Feeder who can give his friends similar effectiveness against aggressive decks. Looking back, Spike Feeder was generally able to take down an attacker and buy back the expected life loss of at least one future burn spell. As much as we have compared Ravenous Baloth to creatures of similar size and cost, at its worst, this new Beast is a much more potent Spike Feeder—complete with all the life gain and twice the size—for just one more colorless mana.

More than its worst case and more than being just a great attacker, Ravenous Baloth gives a player's other Beasts the same life-gain ability at no additional mana cost! In Extended, this could mean squeezing a little more juice out of a Blastoderm with no counters on it. In Standard, it can make cards like Beast Attack—already quite good against other creature decks—even better. When combined with *Onslaught*'s other Beasts, cards with which Ravenous Baloth was designed and developed, in Limited and Block Constructed, it should be even more impressive.

One thing to keep in mind about Ravenous Baloth (and any cards with which it would be effective) is that Beasts tend to be bigger than most other creatures. Oftentimes, an opponent will have to trade a small creature and an additional resource to take out each Beast. When a Beast trades with something smaller, such as a Goblin, Ravenous Baloth will often generate card advantage on the trade by itself. When you factor in the 4 life gained, its ability could negate a pair of Shocks from a red player or a full Sylvan Might from another green mage.

Ravenous Baloth is obviously very good against other creature decks. The place where this creature may be deficient—and fat creatures have never been particularly great in this regard—is against the wily blue mage. As a 4/4 for 2 , Ravenous Baloth may be an efficient attacker, but turn four is typically a place in the game where blue players will have enough mana to answer threats with permission. If fatties resolve against blue, it is usually because the blue player "let" them hit play.

Ravenous Baloth
Creature — Beast
Sacrifice a Beast. You gain 4 life.
"All we know about the Krosan Forest we have learned from those few who made it out alive."
—Elvish refugee
4/4

Blue players will allow opposing threats to resolve for a variety of reasons. Sometimes their life totals are high enough that they would rather use the turn playing library manipulation. Sometimes, though, they have an answer along the lines of Persuasion that will not only answer the creature, but will also turn it against its original controller.

While Ravenous Baloth cannot get around issues of speed and permission all by himself (he will usually need help from either mana acceleration or proactive mana control to resolve successfully), he can give green players a lift against blue creature control. While losing one's best Beast (and gaining 4 life) may not be the best solution to a card like Persuasion, it certainly beats losing it to a blue player . . . and then losing *to* it. At the very least, Ravenous Baloth can help tap down the opponent's mana on his or her turn, giving little more than an expensive Terror in return. While defending against blue mages may not be Ravenous Baloth's forte, it nevertheless contributes even against their style of deck.

I expect Ravenous Baloth to be one of the most heavily played creatures from *Onslaught*. It is an efficient threat. It does wonders on defense. It can win a game all by itself in five short swings, and it can keep the opponent from winning the race while entering the Red Zone turn after turn. A veritable inspiration for other Beasts, Ravenous Baloth gives them a relevant additional ability. It will never turn traitor—and it will keep its buddies in line as well—as long as it hits the board against blue.

Extended Tech

by Brian Kibler

One of the few decks from the old Extended format to survive the transition nearly intact, "The Rock" met with some degree of success before the environment's latest rotation—most notably Mike Pustilnik's win at Grand Prix–Las Vegas—but was never a standout in a field full of decks packing Force of Will and enormous amounts of card drawing. With the recent changes to the format taking away much of blue's potency, The Rock stands to shine.

The Rock

THE ROCK
November 2002

- 4 Birds of Paradise
- 4 Llanowar Elves
- 4 Spike Feeder
- 2 Spike Weaver
- 4 Spiritmonger
- 2 Uktabi Orangutan
- 4 Yavimaya Elder
- 4 Duress
- 1 Living Death
- 4 Pernicious Deed
- 1 Recurring Nightmare
- 2 Vampiric Tutor
- 2 Dust Bowl
- 7 Forest
- 4 Llanowar Wastes
- 4 Swamp
- 4 Treetop Village
- 3 Wasteland

SIDEBOARD

- 4 Chainer's Edict
- 3 Choke
- 3 Druid Lyrist
- 1 Oath of Ghouls
- 2 Spike Weaver
- 2 Uktabi Orangutan

The loss of Wall of Roots is a significant blow to The Rock's mana acceleration base as well as to its early game defense against creature-based decks. Llanowar Elves have less synergy with Pernicious Deed and can't fill the role of early defender, but they play the part of mana producer nicely.

Birds of Paradise
Creature — Bird
Flying
T: Add one mana of any color to your mana pool.
0/1
Llanowar Elves
Creature — Elf
T: Add G to your mana pool.
Llanowar covers a million square miles, yet nobody enters the forest without the elves knowing it.
1/1

The key to this deck is the ability to support four of these. Extended is full of efficient permanents, from Jackal Pup and Cursed Scroll to Grim Monolith and Voltaic Key. The board-clearing power of Pernicious Deed is a powerful tool against such a field.

Spike Feeder
Creature — Spike
Spike Feeder comes into play with two +1/+1 counters on it.
2, Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Feeder: Put a +1/+1 counter on target creature.
Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Feeder: You gain 2 life.
0/0
Yavimaya Elder
Creature — Druid
When Yavimaya Elder is put into a graveyard from play, you may search your library for up to two basic land cards, reveal them, and put them into your hand. If you do, shuffle your library.
2, Sacrifice Yavimaya Elder: Draw a card.
2/1
Spike Weaver
Creature — Spike
Spike Weaver comes into play with three +1/+1 counters on it.
2, Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Weaver: Put a +1/+1 counter on target creature.
2, Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Weaver: Creatures deal no combat damage this turn.
0/0

Uktabi Orangutan
Summon Ape
When Uktabi Orangutan comes into play, destroy target artifact.
"Is it true that the apes wear furs of gold when they marry?"
—Rana, Suq'Ata market fool
2/3

While other decks in the old Extended plowed through the competition on the backs of overpowered and undercosted cards, The Rock methodically wears down the opposition with versatile utility creatures that double as threats including Yavimaya Elder, also known as the "Green Ancestral Recall."

Pernicious Deed
Enchantment
X, Sacrifice Pernicious Deed: Destroy each artifact, creature, and enchantment with converted mana cost X or less.
"Yaw gnash," Freyalise whispered as the seed the bomb, "now you will pay for your treachery."

With Swords to Plowshares gone from the environment, there is little left for this monster to fear. Spiritmonger is this deck's primary finisher.

Spiritmonger
Creature
Whenever Spiritmonger deals damage to a creature, put a +1/+1 counter on Spiritmonger.
G: Regenerate Spiritmonger.
B: Spiritmonger becomes the color of your choice until end of turn.
6/6

Living Death
Sorcery
Set aside all creature cards in all graveyards. Then, put each creature that is in play into its owner's graveyard. Then, put each creature card set aside in this way into play under its owner's control.
Recurring Nightmare
Enchantment

The most powerful anti-control measure there is.

Duress
Sorcery
Target opponent reveals his or her hand. Choose a noncreature, nonland card from it. That player discards that card.
"Change your mind, or I'll change it for you."

Vampiric Tutor
Instant
Search your library for a card, then shuffle your library and put that card on top of it. You lose 2 life.

The Rock's "toolbox", these cards give the deck the ability to overwhelm the opponent with card advantage. Living Death and Recurring Nightmare are especially potent with the deck's utility creatures, while Vampiric Tutor provides a consistent means to search for them or for anything else.

Eleven basic lands provide many targets for Yavimaya Elder to search for.

Doubling as mana producers and threats, these lands provide everything from mana to disruption to beatdown.

SIDEBOARD

Druid Lyrist is slower than Emerald Charm, but it can be recycled with Oath of Ghouls and is the most efficient of the available options.

Loading up on Orangutans helps you break your opponent's toys, like the popular elements of Tinker decks.

Force of Will may be gone, but blue decks will always be among the most popular in Extended.

Its slogan: "For when you absolutely, positively want to fog as much as possible."

With Force of Will leaving the environment, control decks will become much slower, making the attrition plan Oath of Ghouls works with much more effective.

VARIATIONS

If your local metagame is creature-heavy, Phyrexian Plaguelord and/or additional copies of Living Death are quite effective. If you expect to play against red burn decks, Ravenous Baloth can supplement the main deck Spike Feeders. If you expect a great deal of control, additional copies of Oath of Ghouls or Genesis can be effective in the sideboard.

Player Profile
Brian Kibler

by Gary Wise

"I'm very good." Most Pro Tour players may believe this, but few would be as willing as Brian Kibler to tell you as much. For years, the charismatic, philosophical, tie-dye-and-cords-wearing Kibler has been telling anyone who would listen, be they a reader of his column, a kid listening to him tell a story, or a friend on the other end of a one on one dinner, that he is one of the best in the world. Fortunately, his skill has caught up to his rhetoric.

Kibler has been around since the dawn of time. Learning to play **Magic** at the age of thirteen at a Massachusetts game convention, Brian, who has always been an avid tabletop and live-action roleplaying game player, found his interest in those games waning when he discovered that **Magic** could be both fun and profitable. He made his way to one of Grey Matter's earliest $1000 tourneys, and once there, he discovered Wizards of the Coast's plans for the Pro Tour. He played in the first Junior Pro Tour, placing 30th and meeting Mike Bregoli, his first pro contact.

Still one of the game's great deck builders, Kibler has become one of the game's great ambassadors as well.

As Kibler's competitive yearnings expanded, so to did his travels. He started trekking to Hammer's Comics, where he'd play for hours with former pros Nate Clarke and Mark LePine. He made his way to Junior Pro Tours without much success, but that pattern dissolved with his victory at Grand Prix–Toronto. Soon after, though, Brian would take a break from pro **Magic** to concentrate on his wrestling.

For more than two years, Brian didn't bother trying to qualify for the big tourneys, but after his acceptance to Emory in Atlanta as a philosophy major, long-time friend Lan Ho convinced him it was time for a comeback. Brian helped build "Iron Giant", a Tinker deck that carried Lan to a twelfth place finish at 1999 Pro Tour–Chicago.

Within a month, Brian was at Grand Prix–Seattle, where had the opportunity to work with Jeff Fung, Bill Jensen, and Ben Rubin on the "Forbidian" deck they all ended up playing. In Kibler's words:

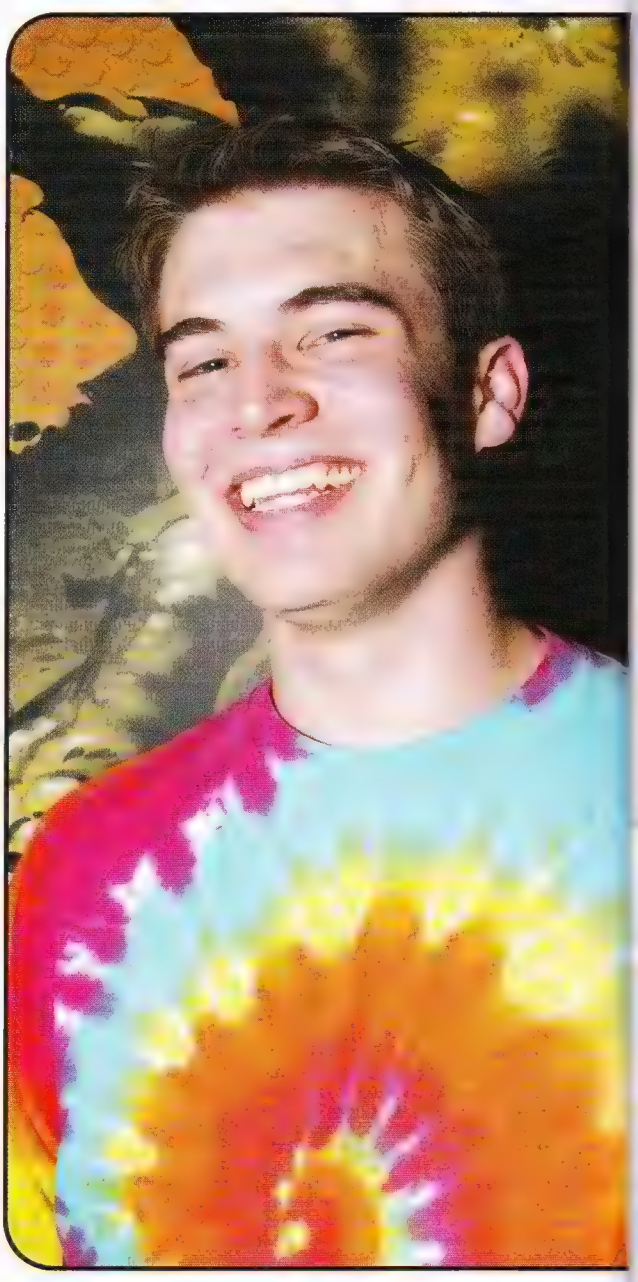
"I knew Huey (Jensen) from New England–area tournaments before he'd even qualified, and Ben I'd met a few times and chatted with a bunch on IRC. I continued working with them for the rebel Pro Tour–New York despite being unqualified, doing a lot of work on the decks the Jumble ended up playing. I qualified for Worlds that year on rating, and we decided to expand the playtest group of The Jumble to include Finkel and the OMS brothers simply to get more people to test—and the rest, as they say, is history."

At Worlds 2000, Brian put his blood, sweat, and Internet access into the building of a Tinker deck. The results were staggering, with Finkel taking the championship. Still, Brian was frustrated with this recurring pattern where he, Rubin, and one or two others would build the decks while others reaped the rewards. Finally, though, Kibler got his day in the sun.

Returning in 2000 to the scene of his Iron Giant success, Kibler rode the broad shoulders of Rith, the Awakener into history, playing the card that would become synonymous with his name to the semifinals before losing to Kai Budde. That loss not withstanding, the transition from builder to player had been made, and Brian has been putting up more consistent finishes on tour ever since. He hasn't yet returned to the Top 8, but it seems to be just a matter of time.

With his Chicago success in tow, Brian started writing about the art of deck building in his own column on **sideboard.com**. He remains not only one of the most accessible stars of the Pro Tour, but also one of the most knowledgeable about the game's history and one of the best-spoken authorities on all things deck-building. When Brian was starting out as a deck builder, he worked with two of the early greats, Brian Schneider and Eric Lauer, who are amongst his greatest influences. Like them, time and again, he's shown up to the Pro Tour playing decks of his own design. Those decks are a credit to their maker and those masters who taught him his craft.

After this year's World Championships, a tournament in which Kibler's misplay against eventual champion Carlos Romão cost him a Top 8 berth, Kibler wrote an article called "Playing in Good Faith", in which he took full responsibility for his error. It signaled an important change in the man who'd once been the boy who couldn't tell you often enough how good he was, showing that his intelligence and talent are now tempered by maturity. Still one of the game's great deck builders, Kibler has become one of the game's great ambassadors as well. A boon to his friends and a boon to his community, Kibler's right—he really is very good.



Player Profile

Svend Geertsen

by Gary Wise

If you look through the annals of the Pro Tour, few names have seen as many seasons or as much success as Svend Geertsen. He was in the Top 32 of the 1995 World Championships and the Top 8 of the 2002 European Championships, and he has seen more success, accomplishment, and money in the years between than most players dream of.

Despite all that success, Geertsen's name is not one you'll find on the lips of the followers of the game. Perhaps it's because he hasn't strung his successes together, or perhaps it's because he hasn't won that one big tournament that puts him over the top, but regardless of all that, when the greatest players of the Pro Tour are discussed, Svend's name must be mentioned, as player, deckbuilder, and pioneer.

Geertsen first heard of **Magic** at the age of thirteen, when his entire class got into the game. A student of Human Kinetics and even then the athletically inclined, Geertsen was more into sports than games and considered **Magic** a waste of time until he heard that a local store, Faraos Cigarer (his present sponsor) was selling cards, giving the young Dane the idea that he could make some cash off the new hobby. His classmates gave him some cards, he built his first deck (complete with seven Craw Wurms), and there was no looking back.

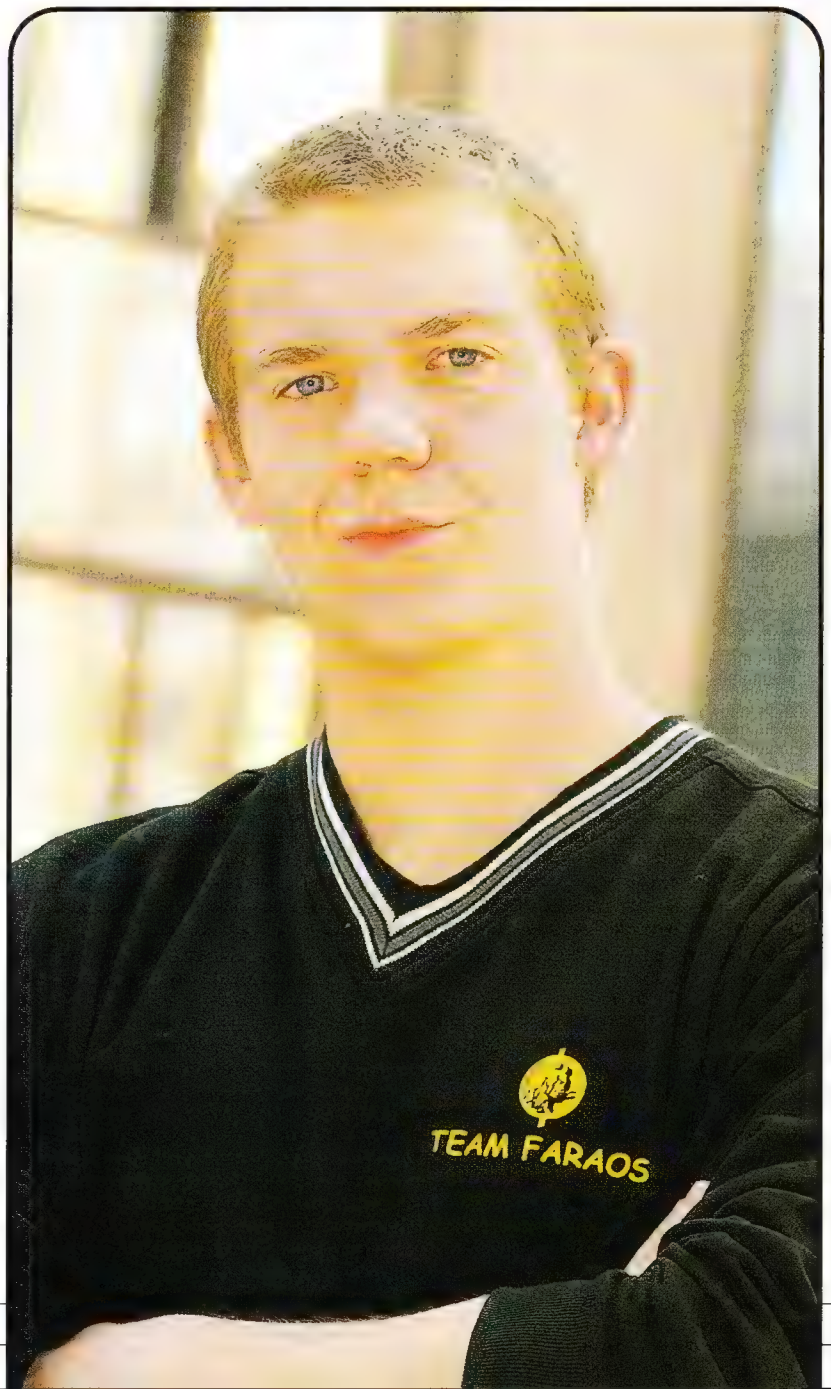
Geertsen quickly started understanding that, sometimes, 0/1 creatures with flying are better than 6/4 monsters, and while his lack of success frustrated him, news that there would be a Danish Championship with a first prize trip to the United States caught his interest. He played in two regional qualifiers, managing an invite to the big tourney where, playing a strong three-color deck featuring Hymn to Tourach, Lightning Bolt, and Control Magic, he made it to the semifinals and earned a spot at the 1995 World Championships in Seattle.

Once there, he made the most of it, with his Top 32 finish proving a hint of things to come. The next year saw Geertsen learn from his Worlds experience, becoming Denmark's dominant player and National Champion before carrying the torch to Worlds for a second time, where he finished in the Top 64. It was the following year that put him on the map to stay.

At Worlds 1997, Geertsen took a little-known green deck called "Señor Stompy" and made it famous with his third place finish. Because he was still an unknown quantity, questions were asked about whether his success was a fluke, but soon the detractors were gone. At 1998 Pro Tour–Los Angeles, while Dave Price was becoming the most famous beatdown mage in history, Geertsen, possibly the best of that ilk, was quietly making his second Top 8, finishing seventh. Then it was Los Angeles 1999 and another seventh place finish, a pattern that was becoming a little frustrating for someone who was obviously one of the best players in the world.

Then, in 2000, Geertsen made a decision that would change the course of his career. Invited to the Invitational in Sydney, he decided to pass on the honor, instead travelling to Brazil for a life-changing six months. While the decision was a good one for Geertsen, it left his **Magic** future in doubt. "After that I was a bit rusty," recalled Svend, who fell off the gravy train as a result. Occasionally he'd show up at the Pro Tour again, leading the pack only to falter down the Swiss home stretch more than once, but in Nice this year, he finally found himself in a familiar position.

"If I make the Masters, I'll make a run at full-time Magic," says Svend, adding that the rust from his Brazil trip is completely gone.



Limited has always been Svend's format of choice, and that fact had never been more obvious as Geertsen made his fourth Top 8. In the quarterfinals, Svend defeated Benjamin Neidrig, but in the semis, despite a truly monstrous deck, he went down to poor draws to eventual winner Eivind Nitter. A man who speaks more by action than words, his one word statement, "Again," spoke volumes about his frustration. Fortunately, he was quick to rebound.

Geertsen's next international tournament was Euros 2002, and once again he was in the Top 8, playing a very Geertsen-esque version of "Deep Dog" that sported Ghostly Wings in the main deck. Unfortunately, lady luck was again working against him as he lost his quarterfinal match to Victor van den Broek, but the man knows that he's back.

"If I make the Masters, I'll make a run at full-time **Magic**," says Svend, adding that the rust from his Brazil trip is completely gone. "If I don't, I'll probably just keep going to Limited Pro Tours." If the latter happens, Svend Geertsen will keep showing up and collecting big checks. If it's the former though, the denizens of the Tour will have a force to deal with, and you can rest assured he'll pick up the big prize he's always been looking for. Then the masses will finally know his name.

Player Profile
Cole Swannack

by Gary Wise

How great is it to be Cole Swannack? If you're reading this, at one time or another you've dreamed about being good at **Magic**. *Really* good at **Magic**. Good enough to take on the Buddes and the Finkels of the world. For most of us, there's something standing in our way, be it talent, funds, drive, or age. Somehow, despite being just thirteen years old, Cole has overcome those obstacles and proved that he can hang with the best on the planet.

Swannack's odyssey began almost five years ago, when he was an avid basketball card collector. One day, while buying a few needed cards, he and his father stumbled upon **Magic** at his local collectables store in Auckland, New Zealand. He took an immediate shine to the game. "It was the game itself that I really liked," admits Cole, "The pictures and collectability weren't that big a deal to me, but the game itself seemed really cool. We bought some that day, took it home, and figured out the rules, and I've been playing ever since."

Within a year, the young star was playing in his first tournaments, and when the **Magic** Invitational made its way to nearby Sydney, he had to be there. Once he'd made his way, he stood out to the competitors, who couldn't help but notice the little blond kid who was there for every match. "I learned a lot from watching the players at the Invitational," Swannack said, "Not so much in the strategy they used, but just in the way they carried themselves during a match—the way they shuffled, or held the cards, or used body language. They really taught me a lot about what it took to be a good player." Not surprisingly, it was Jon Finkel and Kai Budde who made the biggest impressions on the then ten-year-old Swannack.

Cole, an obsessive ***Magic Online*** player, started drafting more regularly in addition to his regular Constructed play. With determination and perseverance, he pushed his game to the point where he could compete with the best his country had to offer. Then came the chance to prove it that he'd been waiting for: the 2002 New Zealand National Championships.

Playing the blue-white-red "Trenches" deck creator Rob Nadebaum had given him, Cole surprised the players of the world by winning his National Championships at the ripe old age of twelve. While a few of those Invitationalists had vague recollections of the kid, the chance of a four-footer posing much of a challenge didn't loom too large. Most of the Worlds competitors shrugged off the news with a smile and a wave of the hand. They were in for a surprise.

Now that Swannack has proven himself, the world is abuzz. Is this the next big thing? One thing's for certain: the kid can play.

Playing a blue-green "Wonder Dog" deck, Cole started Worlds off on the wrong foot, losing to long time Pro Tour player Gabor Papp. Two rounds later, though, American Ben Stark fell victim to the little menace, and then, after advancing to 3-1, Cole was ready to go after some bigger game. First, it was *Sideboard* columnist Gary Wise who felt the kid's sting, and then it was APAC standout Albertus Law, taking Swannack to 5-1. Now it was time to show the world what his Limited game was made of.

Sitting with monsters like Zvi Mowshowitz, Dan Clegg, and Steve O'Mahoney-Shwartz in his first draft, Cole split his first two matches before finishing the draft in style with a controversial win over Clegg. The second draft wasn't much kinder, with a monster table including the likes of Anton Jonsson, John Ormerod, Diego Ostrovich, Antoine Ruel, and John Larkin. Swannack defeated Jonsson but lost his other two matches to finish the day at 8-4, still in contention for Top 8.

Playing blue-green madness in Block Constructed, Cole kept up the pace, facing some more of the game's heavy hitters. A first round loss left his Top 8 hopes dangling by a thread, but then he beat one of the best players in the game, Jens Thorén, and the last APAC Champion, Jin Okamoto, keeping his hopes alive.

After defeating Dave Kearney in round sixteen, a loss to Raphael Levy ended Swannack's Top 8 hopes. He vindicated himself with a final round win over 2001 Invitationalist Scott Richards to finish seventeenth, taking home $3000 for his individual performance. He then lead New Zealand to a respectable ninth place finish in the team event, during which he directed his two older team mates in the Rochester Draft.

So now that Swannack has proven himself, the world is abuzz. Is this the next big thing? The answers are complicated ones, shrouded by more questions, but one thing's for certain: the kid can play. Travelling to Pro Tours could prove an issue, but Cole feels confident that qualifying won't be. If nothing else, his example echoes one sentiment that **Magic** players have been holding onto for years. This is **Magic**—anything is possible.

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Designing Onslaught

Mark's Inside Scoop

by Mark Rosewater

For this issue's column, I'm going to look at the design of several Onslaught *cards.*

Aurification

This card was inspired by No Mercy (from *Urza's Legacy*), which in turn was inspired by the *Vanguard* card Ashnod. Since white isn't really about killing, I thought it would be cooler if this new version turned the affected creatures into Walls. The Creative Text guys then came up with the idea of the creatures turning into gold.

Whenever a creature deals damage to you, put a gold counter on it.
Each creature with a gold counter on it is a Wall in addition to its other creature types. (Walls can't attack.)
When Aurification leaves play, remove all gold counters from all creatures

Catapult Squad

One of the interesting challenges in creating a tribal block was coming up with mechanics that made use of creature types. This card was inspired by the *Odyssey* block cycle of lords (Master Apothecary; Patron Wizard; Zombie Trailblazer; Dwarven Bloodboiler; and Seton, Krosan Protector). The development team liked this card enough that it spawned the rare *Onslaught* lord cycle (Ancestor's Prophet, Catapult Master, Supreme Inquisitor, Gravespawn Sovereign, Skirk Fire Marshall, and Voice of the Woods).

Tap two untapped Soldiers you control: Catapult Squad deals 2 damage to target attacking or blocking creature.
Together they could hit anything between the heavens and the horizon.

Riptide Shapeshifter

My contribution to this card was a single suggestion in our database. Originally, the creature flipped cards until you revealed a creature. I suggested that the Shapeshifter be allowed to choose a creature type that would determine when the flipping stopped. I thought it would be neat to have a few cards like this one that would push players to play different creature type decks.

2, Sacrifice Riptide Shapeshifter: Choose a creature type. Reveal cards from the top of your library until you reveal a creature card of that type. Put that card into play and shuffle the rest into your library

Trade Secrets

Target opponent draws two cards, then you draw up to four cards. That opponent may repeat this process as many times as he or she chooses.

Often during development, a hole opens up in a set. When this happens, the designers are sent a note asking them to come up with cards to fill the hole. If it's late enough in development, the card will often have elements locked in, such as its art or name. When this happens, we have to design the card to fill the hole as-is. For Trade Secrets, I was asked to make a card called "Haggle". Designing from a name is often fun because it requires the designer to think along different lines than usual. The name "Haggle" led me to make a card that allowed a player to bargain with his or her opponent. Obviously, the card was later renamed (due to art concerns, I believe).

Blatant Thievery

Another important part of design is creating cards for different segments of the **Magic** audience. Our research has shown that many casual games are multi-player, so Research & Development tries to make some multi-player cards in each block. This is one such example. This particular card was influenced by Syphon Soul, but instead of stealing life, this card steals creatures.

For each opponent, gain control of target permanent that player controls. (This effect doesn't end at end of turn.)
"I'll leave subtlety to the rich."

Blackmail

Blackmail
Sorcery
Target player reveals three cards from his or her hand and you choose one of them. That player discards that card.
Even the most virtuous person is only one secret away from being owned by the Cabal.

This card was originally called Sorrow, and originally, it wasn't a **Magic** card. For years, I've been working on a trading card game called Mood Swings in my spare time. All the Mood Swings cards are named after a mood or emotion. One of the problems I ran into while working on the game was with a card called Curiosity that allowed you to look at your opponent's hand. Due to mechanics within the game, this caused a problem, so instead of looking at all the cards, you got to look at three of the opponent's choice. This mechanic worked well enough that I tried it on a discard card. During *Odyssey* design, I realized that the card transitioned naturally into **Magic**.

Kamahl, Fist of Krosa

This card was another hole that appeared in development because the team didn't like the first version. I came up with the following:

ORIGINAL DESIGN:

Kamahl, Land Lord 3

Creature -Druid Legend

All lands get +1/+1.

2: Target land is a 1/1 creature until end of turn.

3/4

Target land becomes a 1/1 creature until end of turn. It's still a land.
Creatures you control get +3/+3 and gain trample until end of turn.
"My mind has changed. My strength has not."

The development team liked the card, but after playing with it, they made a few changes. First, they lowered the cost to animate a land, and second, they took off the land lord ability because the set didn't have any lands that could self-animate. Instead, they decided to capture part of the flavor of the set's story and allow Kamahl to play Overrun.

Doom Cannon

As Doom Cannon comes into play, choose a creature type.
3, Sacrifice a creature of the chosen type: Doom Cannon deals 3 damage to target creature or player.

This card sat around in a file until it found the proper set to call home. Designed several years ago under the name Creature Catapult, the card sat in a file of unused ideas. While designing cards for *Onslaught*, I went through some of my old card files and stumbled across this card. Realizing that it had perfect synergy with *Onslaught*, I turned it over to the development team.

I hope this has given you a little peek into the different ways that cards are designed.

Here Comes Extended

Big Changes in the Power 9

by Alex Shvartsman

This year's World Championships have come and gone, but the impact on all things **Magic** is long-lasting. Players from all over the world tuned in to the *Sideboard* Online coverage of the tournament to find out what decks they will be facing—or copying—in months to come. Until *Onslaught* is released, the metagame will not change significantly, so players need to get their hands on the rare cards that are part of the winning decks.

Psychatog is certainly the strongest archetype—or several archetypes—seen at the tournament. It dominated the Top 8 and faced off in the finals. We will surely see Underground River, Cunning Wish, Burning Wish, Upheaval, and Fact or Fiction trade at a premium. Players will also take full advantage of the Wishes to diversify their sideboards, so we should see a brisk trade in Obliterates, Mana Shorts, and the like. The only other deck type to appear in the Top 8 was Opposition, making sure that the card itself (and especially the black-bordered version) will remain in high demand.

Although no blue-green tempo decks made the Top 8, that archetype had the highest win percentage in Standard, guaranteeing its popularity among tournament players in months to come. Fortunately for those without a lot of cards, the deck utilizes very few expensive cards. Even Call of the Herd has not been making the cut in this archetype lately. Instead, it is all about uncommon cards like Roar of the Wurm, Wonder, and Arrogant Wurm—all of which have been trading at an easy $2.

While *Invasion* block cards are slowing down and receding in price as we get closer to the format's rotation, *Odyssey* block cards are hotter thanks to the Block Constructed Pro Tour Qualifier season. Two decks have been dominating this format: monoblack control and blue-green threshold. Mutilate, Nantuko Shade, and Haunting Echoes remain highly desirable, as the black deck gains literally nothing from *Judgment*. Genesis and Glory are both seeing some *Odyssey* Block Constructed play. That combined with their casual player appeal keeps both cards highly tradable as well.

Digital cards remain strong as well, with more and more people cross-trading them for printed cards and vice versa. On average, a digital rare is worth slightly more than its printed counterpart because of lower supply and higher cost of packs online. With very little investment cost and great access to other players, many ***Magic*** *Online* regulars have become small-time dealers, making it easier for those willing to spend a few dollars or tickets to obtain the cards they want.

Another recent trend has been the general lowering of prices on supplies, especially deck protectors. With more and more companies competing against UltraPro in this market, the prices have gone down and the overall quality of the various sleeves out there has gone up. A bit of good news as we get closer to the Christmas shopping season.

— Alex's Power 9 —

The Cards That Are Currently in the Highest Demand

1

Untap Morphling
Morphling gains flying until end of turn
Morphling cannot be the target of spells or abilities until end of turn
Morphling gets +1 +1 until end of turn
Morphling gets -1 +1 until end of turn

The most desirable of Extended cards, as everyone gets ready for changes to this format

2

Selected by **magicthegathering.com** readers to be in *Eighth Edition*

3

Psychatog's and blue-green's most powerful weapon

4

Nantuko Shade
Creature — Insect Shade
Nantuko Shade gets +1 +1 until end of turn
"If the Nantuko only knew what awaits them beyond death, they would abandon all they hold dear."
Cabal Patriarch

The best creature in *Odyssey* Block Constructed

5

Mutilate
Sorcery
All creatures get -1/-1 until end of turn for each swamp you control
"They appreciate my handiwork. I hear their joy in every scream."
—Chainer, dementia master

The black Wrath of God

6

Call of the Herd
Sorcery
Put a 3/3 green Elephant creature token into play
Flashback 3 (You may play this card from your graveyard for its flashback cost. Then remove it from the game.)

Down from the top three spots for the first time in several months

7

Flying
: Creatures you control gain protection from the color of your choice until end of turn. Play this ability only if Glory is in your graveyard.
"Glory was gone; Glory [illegible] here."
Scroll of Beginnings

Judgment's current #1 rare

8

Discard two cards from your hand: Remove Anurid Brushhopper from the game. Return it to play under its owner's control at end of turn.
It's so tough it can frighten itself into hiding.

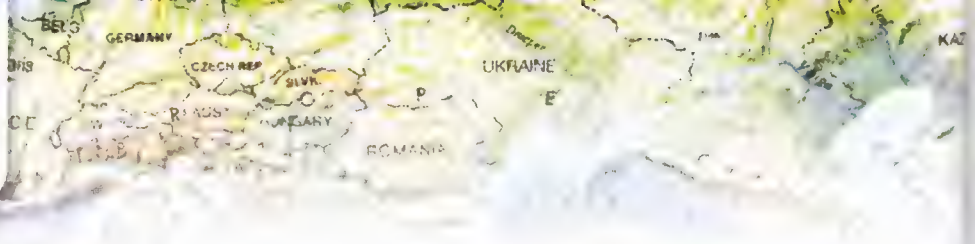
Still hot, but the initial Brushhopper fad is receding

9

Reveal the top five cards of your library. An opponent separates those cards into two face-up piles. Put one pile into your hand and the other into your graveyard

The most expensive in-print uncommon ever?

DCI Global Rankings



This section highlights the Top 10 ranked players from each country. It uses DCI Composite ratings, which are the averages of the players' Limited and Constructed ratings. Only countries that have at least ten players with Composite ratings are included. The number of sanctioned matches that each person has played is also included. DCI ratings are updated every week on Tuesday night, Pacific time. Wednesday is the best time to view updated ratings.

These ratings are from Wednesday, August 20, 2002. For the most updated ratings and rankings, visit thedci.com.

Argentina

2	Gabriel Caligaris	Buenos Aires	2034	464
4	Jose Barbero	Campana	2001	566
5	Andres Viola			
6	Gerardo Saiz	Cordoba	1919	264
8	Ernesto Mingorance	Buenos Aires	1917	566
9	Lucas Ramirez	Merlo	1907	573
10	Matias Bollati	Cordoba	1895	330

Australia

2	Dante Rosati	Melbourne	1920	236
4	Andrew Lai	Adelaide	1911	371
6	Joe Connolly	North Melbourne	1908	321
8	Jarron Puszet	Melbourne	1894	649
9	Daniel Romans	Brisbane	1888	
10	Andrew Grain	Melbourne	1887	448

Austria

2	Benedikt Klauser	Vienna	1940	932
4	Florian Oberer	Salzburg	1934	632
6	Kung-Chieh Wang	Salzburg	1904	
8	Erwin Ceil	Vienna	1889	554
10	Mark Loh	Salzburg	1880	587

Belgium

1	Gert Coeckelbergh	Holsbeek	1954	
2	Peter Gysemans	Leuven	1903	698
3	Bernardo Da Costa Cabral	Brussel	1896	393
4	Jan Doise	Herent	1888	1022
5	Alexandre Darras	Brussel	1878	547
7	Mathijs Luts	Hasselt		
8	Johan Kennes	Mechelen	1868	253
8	Luis Van Riet	Gent		
10	Dominique Coene	Heverlee	1864	421

Brazil

2	Leopoldo M. M.	Vitoria	1995	
4	Andre Barros	Sao Paulo	1944	
5	Victor Galimberti	São Paulo	1930	459
8	Raphael Gunther	Jaragua Do Sul	1904	289
10	Pedro Motta	Rio De Janeiro	1894	250

Canada

1	Jeff Cunningham	Vancouver	1989	704
4	Kyle Hadfield	Wolfville	1966	134
5	Gabriel Tsang	Toronto	1954	1235
6	Louis Bolduc	Brossard	1945	560
9	Jason Howden	Winnipeg	1940	1288

Chile

2	Juan Reutter	Santiago	1976	295
4	Waldemar Campos	La Serena	1937	338
5	Andres Hojman	Santiago		
6	Jose Capdevila	Santiago	1906	634
7	José Luis Echeverría Paredes	Santiago	1891	243
8	Camargo Andres	Santiago	1883	540
9	Walter Witt	Santiago	1879	344
10	Patricio Quiroz	Santiago	1862	527

China

2	Dong Zhong	Shenyang	1884	139
4	Shu Nu Zhang	Shanghai	1815	284
5	Jun Cai	Shanghai	1777	231
7	Hong Gang Lin	Beijing	1774	161
8	Zhang Yu	Beijing	1769	152
9	Xuan-li Wang			
10	Zhi Giang Cai	Shanghai	1764	142

Croatia

2	Sasha Zorc	Zagreb	1957	587
4	Filip Cec	Rijeka	1872	448
5	Ladislav Zupan	Zagreb	1841	484
7	Ivan			
8	Blagoj Jakimov	Porec	1825	390
10	Damir Simpovic	Zagreb	1805	156

Czech Republic

2	Jaroslav Sita	Prague	1972	800
4	Jan Brodzik	Ostrava	1903	885
6	David Korejtko	Zdar Nad Sazavou	1880	269
7	Ales Borek	Brno	1879	706
10	Arnost Zidek	Ostrava	1867	1088

Denmark

2	Peter Myrvig	Kolding	1982	685
4	Jonas Cleemann	Copenhagen	1965	687
6	Peter Laier	Copenhagen	1900	719
8	Rune Espersen	Ballerup	1894	
10	Jakob Steinaa	Copenhagen	1885	890

Dominican Republic

2	Julio Cabrera	Santo Domingo	1842	268
4	Daniel Cabrera	Santo Domingo	1806	467
6	Bryan Daniel Dominguez	Santo Domingo	1794	328
8	Flavio Espinal	Santo Domingo	1766	266
10	Jonathan David	Santo Domingo	1753	330

England

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Gary Wise	Surrey	2013	1092
2	Oliver Schneider	London	1997	1668
3	John Ormerod	Redhill	1985	1216
4	Ben Ronaldson	Surrey	1982	695
5	Andrew Mitchell	Maidenhead	1955	[illegible]
6	Martin Garcia	London	1942	528
[illegible]	[illegible]	Isle Of Wight	[illegible]	[illegible]
7	David Grant	Surrey	1937	584
9	Chris Clapton	Yateley	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Stuart Wright	Frimley	1930	714

Estonia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Aare Klooster	Tallinn	1814	132
2	Martti Lauri	Tallinn	1770	218
3	Veljo Hagu	[illegible]	1765	349
4	Tanel Lumiste	Tartu	1758	340
5	Margus Liiber	[illegible]	1725	146
6	Neeme Luoris	Tallinn	1711	275
7	Risto Aaver	[illegible]	1706	151
8	Lauri Lemming	Tartu	1703	184
9	Kaupo Iher	[illegible]	1701	133
10	Kaivo Nimtaup	Kohtla-Jarve	1700	206

Finland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Tuomas Kotiranta	[illegible]	2028	481
2	Tomi Walamies	Kauniainen	2024	1143
3	Mikko Punakallio	Helsinki	2003	499
4	Toomi Hovi	Helsinki	2000	744
5	Arto Hiltunen	Helsinki	1956	667
6	Mikko Snygg	Helsinki	1945	789
7	Mike Wall	Turku	1924	292
8	Antti Puurula	Kerava	1916	246
9	Arthuri Björk	Kuopio	1913	375
10	Jussi Salovaara	Helsinki	1887	462

France

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
[illegible]	Benjamin Caumes	Cusset	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Raphael Levy	Toulouse	2077	958
3	Pierre Malherbaud	Paris	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Amiel Tenenbaum	Bagnolet	2057	1181
5	Christophe Haim	Paris	2046	746
6	Antoine Ruel	Aubervilliers	2037	1434
7	Nicolas Olivieri	Montpellier	2011	961
8	Franck Canu	Paris	1979	2029
9	Nicolas Bomarel	Malemort Sur Correze	197	[illegible]
10	Gabriel Nassif	Paris	1961	1807

Germany

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Kai Budde	[illegible]	2079	1675
2	David Brucker	München	2054	686
3	Mark Zieger	[illegible]	2049	866
4	Dirk Baberowski	Salzgitter	2032	720
5	Daniel Zink	[illegible]	2009	505
6	Christoph Lippert	München	2005	722
7	Christian Luhrs	[illegible]	1998	1008
8	Patrick Mello	Hamburg	1979	1365
9	Mario Zenke	Dresden	1970	457
10	Rene Kraft	Mainz	1958	1217

Greece

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Dimitris Kopsidas	Crete	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Dimitrios Chatsios	Thessaloniki	1894	283
[illegible]	Dimitris Aperghis	Athens	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Panaiotis Zacharias	Athens	1864	344
[illegible]	Alex Bakopoulos	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Simon Bertiou	Kifissia	1855	318
[illegible]	Alex Ioannidis	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Jon Kounidis	Thessaloniki	1845	334
[illegible]	[illegible]	Nea Kiffisia	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Georgios Kapalas	Kipseli	1843	610

Hong Kong

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Wing Lok Tan	[illegible]	1979	609
2	Johnson Wan	Hong Kong	1973	448
3	Ngai Kwok Hing	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Stephen Ho	Central	1882	394
5	King Yim Kingston Tong	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Kai Cheong Tang	Hong Kong	1865	539
7	Chun Hung Wong	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Shing Hong, Aaron, Ngan	Hong Kong	1845	155
9	Kai Yip Lee	Kowloon	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Ng Teddy	Hong Kong	1829	983

Hungary

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
[illegible]	Zsolt Tokodi	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Andras Balogh	Szekesfehervar	1878	296
3	Gabor Papp	[illegible]	[illegible]	784
4	Michael Durham	Budapest	1844	687
5	Gergely Gardos	[illegible]	[illegible]	473
6	Károly Liptak	Budapest	1831	391
7	Tihor Miklós	[illegible]	[illegible]	237
8	Marcell Kardos	Budapest	1807	275
9	Daniel Gulyas	Budapest	1793	536
10	Laszlo Ronyak	Mályi	1792	204

Iceland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Arelius Areliusarson	Reykjavik	1840	335
2	Yngvi Sighvatsson	Reykjavik	1810	315
3	Robert Ulfarsson	Reykjavik	1747	141
4	Gunnar Johannsson	Reykjavik	1728	106
5	Marteeon Fridriksson	Reykjavik	1722	225
6	Stefan Fridriksson	Reykjavik	1714	167
7	Johann Moller	Reykjavik	1706	147
7	Halldór Kjartansson	Hafnarfjördur	1706	117
9	Ragnar Mar Kjartansson	[illegible]	1678	24
10	Gudmundur Viggosson	Hafnarfjördur	1671	128

Indonesia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Donny Kristianto	Surabaya	[illegible]	244
2	Welly Hadiwidjaja	Jakarta	1799	161
3	Andy Budiharto	Surabaya	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Rudy Widjaja	Jakarta Utara	1780	245
5	Oliver Suryasenggara	Tangerang	[illegible]	173
6	Kawi Santosa	Jakarta Utara	1760	219
7	Vidianto Wijaya	Jakarta	[illegible]	150
8	Jonsen Sulaeman	Jakarta Barat	1757	94
9	Andreas Pranoto	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Kristian Karl	Java	1739	128

Ireland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	John Larkin	[illegible]	2017	610
2	David Kearney	Dublin	1973	528
3	Stewart Shinkins	[illegible]	1877	691
4	Cormac Smyth	Cork	1857	339
5	Diarmuid Quirke	Cork	1854	203
6	Robert Mckeon	Dublin	1848	424
7	Oliver Hyde	Cork	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Eoin Brosnan	Swords	1814	619
9	Justin Walsh	[illegible]	1796	154
10	Ciaran Lawlor	Dublin	1790	187

Israel

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Uri Peleg	Ierusalem	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Danny Yosef	Kiriat Motzkin	1815	102
3	Daniel Bird	Haifa	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Orr Bildner	Tel-Aviv	1804	333
5	Eyal Leshem	Jerusalem	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Ayal Hassidim	Jerusalem	1783	145
7	Yoni Iny	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Nadav Zivelin	Tel-Aviv	1758	421
9	Roey Tzezana	Haifa	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Alex Shtemshain	Haifa	1748	70

Italy

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Andrea Sanzin	Trieste	1062	529
2	Marco Lombardi	Genova	2039	728
3	Luca Chiera	[illegible]	1997	1240
4	Dario Minieri	Roma	1979	1632
5	Stefano Fiore	[illegible]	1978	1042
6	Matteo Bianchi	Massa	1967	701
6	Matteo Di Tomaso	[illegible]	1967	611
8	Alessandro Vegna	La Spezia	1953	531
9	Daniele Canavesi	[illegible]	1952	664
10	Andrea Paselli	Bologna	1947	622

Japan

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Tsuyoshi Ikeda	[illegible]	2017	694
2	Katsuhiro Mori	Setagaya-Ku	2016	1166
3	Goroo Matsui	Kahoku-Gun	2007	519
4	Jin Okamoto	Nishio-Shi	2003	1147
5	Kazuhiko Mitsuya	[illegible]	1971	399
6	Eisaku Itadani	Kurashiki-Shi	1965	682
6	Kazuya Hirabayashi	[illegible]	1965	1044
8	Itaru Ishida	Meguro-Ku	1961	965
8	Yuuki Murakami	Shiroishi-Shi	1961	442
10	Akira Asahara	Sagamihara-Shi	1944	502

Luxembourg

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Charles Delvaux	Luxembourg	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Fabrice Encelle	Epinal	1777	198
3	[illegible]omain Glodt	Kayl	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Jerome Vilm	Strasser	1756	365
5	Daniel Gallion	Kayl	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Charel Lorang	Luxembourg	1726	158
7	Fabrice Caurla	Monderlange	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Steve Hatto	Izeg	1679	148
9	Steve Bruck	Fentange	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Jhemp Weihnachter	Luxembourg	1663	53

Malaysia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Han How Sim	Selangor	2011	320
2	Mun Wye Tang	Penang	1913	328
3	Pang Ming Wee	Selangor	1910	601
4	Weng Kwong Aw Yeong	Georgetown	1907	297
5	Wai Kin Au Yong	Petaling Jaya	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Jerry Soh	Petaling Jaya	1868	650
7	Lee Soh	Petaling Jaya	1866	634
8	Allen Boon Hor Tan	Kuala Lumpur	1858	269
9	Wei Ren Khoo	Petaling Jaya	1857	437
10	Tan Chuen Hwa	Kuala Lumpur	1856	641

Mexico

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Gerardo Godinez Estrada	[illegible]	1922	832
2	Carlos Medina	Mexico City	1896	316
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	1894	706
4	Hugo Araiza	Mexico City	1878	589
5	Francisco Barboza	[illegible]	1873	698
6	Jorge Gonzalez	Mexico City	1849	558
7	Julio Vazquez	[illegible]	1840	361
8	Ivan Cortes	Tuchitepec	1820	379
9	Pablo Anzorena	Mexico City	1809	394
10	Gustavo Chapela	Mexico City	1808	550

Netherlands

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jeroen Remie	Doorgen	2088	724
2	Kamiel Cornelissen	Enschede	2072	876
3	Tom van de Logt	Groesbeek	2052	722
4	Victor van den Broek	Eindhoven	2033	700
5	Alexander Witt	Amsterdam	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Matt Henstra	Tilburg	1977	405
7	Joost Vollebregt	Amsterdam	1976	729
8	Noah Boeken	Amsterdam	1968	1149
9	Brian Snepvangers	Utrecht	1952	2043
10	Jelger Wiegersma	Eindhoven	1951	1253

New Zealand

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Scott Richards	Amberley	2037	671
2	Cole Swannack	Auckland	2005	378
3	James White	[illegible]	1970	533
4	Kerel Laycock	Palmerston North	1906	3[illegible]
5	Sergey Nomi	Palmerston North	190[illegible]	[illegible]
6	Julian Brown-Santirso	Amberley	1864	441
7	Digby Carter	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	John Denz	Auckland	1851	3[illegible]
9	Roger Miller	[illegible]	1847	[illegible]
10	Damian Brown-Santirso	Christchurch	1843	616

Northern Ireland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	David Gray	Belfast	1823	616
2	Thomas Michael Carlisle	Carrickfergus	1809	149
3	Adrian Donnelly	Belfast	1753	203
4	Thomas Monaghan	Holywood	1732	320
5	Roger Dale	Belfast	1727	506
6	Ronan Donnelly	Antrim	1722	309
7	Mark Hunter	Belfast	1721	237
7	Conor Holmes	Belfast	1721	169
9	Colin Mcburney	Carrickfergus	1719	617
10	Edward O'Kane	Belfast	1691	50

Norway

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Øyvind Ødegaard	Oslo	2005	1692
2	Thomas Gundersen	Trondheim	1984	666
3	Bjørn Jocumsen	[illegible]	1974	1205
4	Haakon Monsen	Øverby	1965	1082
5	Nicolai Herzog	Oslo	1940	1460
6	Sigurd Eskeland	Ostersund	1926	1275
7	Thomas Johansen	[illegible]	[illegible]	234
8	Kim Lund	Oslo	1904	587
9	Erik Nebell	[illegible]	1901	1034
10	Øyvind Harding	Blåmoen	1898	353

Peru

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jorge Melgar	Lima	1927	307
2	Steven Ludwig Hoyos	Lima	1894	284
3	Juan De La Riva Fort	Lima	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	Renato Bustamante	Arequipa	1796	109
5	Waldry De Oliveira S.	Lima	[illegible]	116
6	Rome Barrios Da Fieno	Lima	1752	263
7	Jean Paul Hindreau	Lima	[illegible]	[illegible]
8	Antonio Vargas	Lima	1742	174
9	Guillermo Bejarano	La Molina	[illegible]	182
10	Anthony Arenas Avendaño	Lima	1735	130

Philippines

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Gerald Camangon	Manila	1894	421
2	Dominic Ortega	Makati	1884	849
3	Felix Gonzales	[illegible]	1867	886
4	Bayani Manansala	Caloocan City	1866	384
5	Richie Chua	[illegible]	1859	339
5	Roel Soliveres	Caloocan City	1859	447
5	Frederick Salazar	[illegible]	1859	472
8	Francis Robert Profeta	Manila	1858	1274
9	Mario Padua	Quezon City	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Charles Racelis	Pasig	1847	431

Poland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Przemek Wolowiec	Bytom	1929	596
2	Adam Urban	Kalisz	1871	461
3	Marcin Sados	Warsaw	1862	262
4	Adrian Ciszek	Krakow	1861	621
5	Przemek Obarski	Warsaw	1860	919
6	Mariusz Gorniak	Pruszkow	1857	649
7	Mateusz Mroz	Warszawa	1854	440
8	Krzysztof Domaszewski	Warszawa	1853	477
9	Pawel Karaszewski	Warsaw	1852	905
10	Piotr Widuch	Laziska Gorne	1851	451

Portugal

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Joao Duarte	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Tiago Chan	Lisboa	1943	875
3	Helder Coelho	[illegible]	[illegible]	870
4	Hugo Machado	Lisboa	1920	858
5	Marcio Carvalho	[illegible]	[illegible]	475
6	Pedro Dores	Baixa Da Banheira	1902	429
7	Kuniyoshi Ishii	Vila Franca De Xira	[illegible]	877
8	Renato Graça	Lisboa	1898	573
9	Nuno Balseiro	[illegible]	[illegible]	617
10	Pedro Balladeira	Forte Da Casa	1884	496

Russian Federation

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Dmitry Karmanov	St. Petersburg	1932	1266
2	Yaroslav Kondratiev	St. Petersburg	1923	1270
3	Albert Khamzin	Novosibirsk	1909	1113
4	Anton Missa	St. Petersburg	1893	1671
5	Alexander Strakhov	Moscow	1879	1240
6	Eugene Netedov	St. Petersburg	1868	1768
6	Daniil Lantukhov	Moscow	1868	1072
8	Denis Makarov	Moscow	1863	935
9	Marat Asanov	[illegible]	[illegible]	67
9	Andrey Osipov	Moscow	1857	807

Scotland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Edward Ross	Perth	2006	749
2	Julian Haigh	Perth	1930	1545
3	Gary Campbell	Benholm	1897	1322
4	Andrew Tee	Dundee	1838	301
5	Duncan Tweedale	Edinburgh	1826	553
6	Benjamin Sanders	Midlothian	1820	521
7	Rob Brooks	[illegible]	1819	812
8	Barry Brown	Aberdeenshire	1813	449
9	Silas Bath	Dundee	1810	833
10	Douglas Penman	Dunfermline	1794	408

Singapore

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ming Huang Royce Chai	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2	Albertus Hui Chin Law	Singapore	1984	897
3	Yujian Zhou	[illegible]	1958	712
4	Chang Chua	Singapore	1948	550
5	Sam Lei Kang Lau	Singapore	1914	770
6	Lance Chin Wei Yeong	Singapore	1902	552
7	Junyang Ang	Singapore	1900	1011
8	Gary Tae Tan	Singapore	1895	228
9	Steve Wei Quan Tan	Singapore	1879	473
10	Kok Seng Ong	Singapore	1874	490

Slovak Republic

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jan Tomcani	[illegible]	1920	835
2	Tomas Tomecek	Bratislava	1896	265
3	Juraj Smrek	[illegible]	1877	444
4	Peter Bero	Bratislava	1840	554
5	Robert Jurkovic	Bratislava	1835	594
6	Martin Polak	Bratislava	1822	506
7	Rasto Smrek	Senec	1807	[illegible]
8	Dalibor Szegho	Senec	1794	454
9	Erik Szurkovic	Senec	1791	402
10	Andrej Gallus	Nitra	1789	633

Slovenia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Andrej Brglez	Kamnica	1891	563
2	Lavs Primoz	Ljubljana	1873	379
3	Jakob Tomse	[illegible]	1862	405
4	Anze Avsec	Ljubljana	1842	473
5	Ziga Fritz	[illegible]	1816	602
6	Andrej Rizner	Ankaran	1806	181
7	Mateuz Asic	[illegible]	1790	196
8	Zeljko Vasic	Portoroz	1789	416
9	Ziga Skrbec	[illegible]	1783	593
10	Andrej Renko	Ljubljana	1778	696

South Africa

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Pieter Loubser	Bellville	1946	527
2	Jason Neale	Pretoria	1928	516
3	Andrew Klein	Cape Town	1926	541
4	Christiaan Du Plessis	Pietersburg	1879	241
5	Arno Nortier	Claremont	1879	719
6	Alan Campbell	Cape Town	1878	453
7	David Hattingh	Johannesburg	1865	474
8	Andrew Stephens	Johannesburg	1859	567
9	Russel Lee	Cape Town	1857	452
10	Thomas Van Heerden	Cape Town	1854	406

South Korea

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ji-Hoon Kim	Seoul	1897	245
2	Sang-Ryeol Lee	Seoul	1814	410
3	Sang Seok Lee	Ansan	1808	177
4	Hyun Il Jang	Seoul	1798	211
5	Yong-Ho Kim	Seoul	1779	128
6	Sang-Oh Yoo	Seoul	1771	148
7	Jeong Ho Hong	Pusan	1766	104
8	Joshua Cho	Ajou	1757	181
9	Sang Jeong	Seoul	1746	321
10	Dong-Woo Son	Seoul	1740	286

Spain

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Carlos Barrado	Madrid	1965	509
2	Daniel Bethencourt	Vilanova I La Geltru	1934	512
3	Ivan Ruiz	Barcelona	1907	493
4	Ivan Garcia	Las Palmas	1839	166
5	Oscar Perez Pino	Barcelona	1837	481
6	Francisco José Hidalgo	Martorell	1880	548
7	Carlos Gomez Alonso	Madrid	1834	294
8	Roberto Maestro	Valladolid	1872	259
9	Jacob Arias Garcia	Guadalajara	1868	237
10	Roc Herms	Rubi	1867	634

Sweden

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Anton Jansson	Umea	2109	337
2	Rickard Österberg	Göteborg	1985	608
3	Pär Knuts	Linköping	1974	395
4	Morgan Karlsson	Göteborg	1948	1133
5	Mattias Fredriksson	Umea	1941	399
6	Thomas Rosholm	Malmoe	1934	573
7	Magnus Jonsson	Linköping	1933	1137
8	Albert Alsharif	Göteborg	1925	372
9	Jens Thulin	Umea	1923	436
10	David Linder	Norrtalje	1919	426

Switzerland

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Michael Hagen	Langnau	1940	442
2	Gennari Raphael	Geneve	1904	648
3	Cesar Monnerat	Lutry	1890	337
4	Mario Steger	Künten	1888	617
5	Laurent Gallenmatter	Bulle	1887	408
6	Martin Zuercher	Bigelen	1878	581
7	Christian Pugi	Thun	1871	644
8	Michael Suwald	Zürich	1865	308
9	Cesar Bonnet	Meinier	1847	423
10	Benjamin Nsong	Berikon	1856	521

Taiwan

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Chung Kuo	Taipei	1960	332
2	Chi-Chung Hsiung	Taipei	1954	686
3	Tai Ching Kuo	Taipei	1939	468
4	Norris Ming Jer Sung	Taipei	1938	923
5	Hsiao Jun Hsiung	Taipei	1924	114
6	Chang-Ming Tung	Taipei	1906	509
7	Chen-Ta Wang	Taipei	1899	741
8	Tobey Tamber	Kaohsiung	1891	1572
9	John Chen	Taipei	1834	173
10	Chih-Cheng Ho	Taipei	1869	524

Thailand

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Phongsak Tankanjana	Bangkok	1896	491
2	Boonchai Jirapongpreeda	Samutsakorn	1869	511
3	Apit Laopetpan	Bangkok	1852	547
4	Phattharawat Yeodkhiaw	Bangkok	1847	257
5	Nuttawut Chaichotchuang	Bangkok	1844	228
6	Chet Surapanpicak	Bangkok	1822	328
7	Wongsa Chaisomphob	Bangkok	1817	442
8	Ekapong Pronpornlikit	Bangkok	1815	368
9	Kom Chaiyasit	Bangkok	1809	188
10	Prapon Maneechareonwong	Bangkok	1808	279

Turkey

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Cihan Ercan	Istanbul	1847	298
2	Basar Gedikoglu	Istanbul	1836	174
3	Ali Bostanci	Ankara	1824	179
4	Yusuf Vefa	Istanbul	1814	398
5	Ahmet Ozkan	Istanbul	1811	441
6	Vedat Özpriales	Istanbul	1798	121
7	Ismail Ozkan	Istanbul	1795	156
8	Osman Özgüven	Istanbul	1764	178
9	Hasan Hanak	Istanbul	1751	144
10	Mustafa Erkol	Istanbul	1749	136

Ukraine

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Andrey Filatchenkov	Kiev	1957	325
2	Yuri Kolomeyko	Kiev	1955	1147
3	Ivan Kovalyov	Kiev	1949	1382
4	Sergey Kuznetsov	Dnepropetrovsk	1937	549
5	Borodyan Yaroslav	Kiev	1847	1215
6	Lev Ankudinov	Kiev	1829	878
7	Ivan Rybchenko	Kiev	1821	760
8	Andrey Gubachev	Odessa	1816	618
9	Igor Bodnarenko	Kiev	1796	664
10	Vladimir Omelyanyuk	Kiev	1784	561

United Arab Emirates

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Ismail Mamdoh	Dubai	1846	447
2	Jordan Gallant	Dubai	1813	327
3	Fayed Idrees	Dubai	1740	491
4	Jeff Kearns	Abu Dhabi	1722	316
5	Lalou Rao	Dubai	1714	291
6	Vishak Menon	Dubai	1679	135
7	Dhiren Gangani	Dubai	1660	82
8	Dylan Koopman	Abu Dhabi	1658	28
9	James Cotton	Abu Dhabi	1644	8
10	Marin Kvez	Dubai	1643	214

United States

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Jesse Kraai	Missouri	3112	707
2	Brian Davis	Memphis	3075	1084
3	Chad Hemphill	Dallas	2973	1209
4	Brian Selden	San Diego	2060	829
5	Michael Popovich	Rancho Palos Verdes	2059	1184
6	Ken Ho	San Francisco	2056	429
7	Ray Kuppens	Rochester	2051	1098
8	Zvi Mowshowitz	New York	2051	1329
9	Chris Ishmael	Missouri	2051	867
10	Bill Streit	Tampa	2050	523

Uruguay

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Alejandro Perdomo	Montevideo	1827	345
2	Guillermo Gruenka	Montevideo	1826	431
3	Ivan Lopez	Montevideo	1821	471
4	Rodrigo Arauja	Montevideo	1821	286
5	Jorge Pena Silva	Montevideo	1818	786
6	Victor Pintos	Montevideo	1812	521
7	Leo Lemos	Montevideo	1802	429
8	Fernando Vega	Montevideo	1792	586
9	Leandro Alvarez	Montevideo	1786	261
10	Jorge Sierra	Montevideo	1779	180

Venezuela

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Leonardo Lezama	Caracas	1901	444
2	Eduardo Muñoz	Caracas	1846	218
3	Jesus Cano	Caracas	1804	211
4	Marlon Garcia	Caracas	1796	243
5	Edgar Perez	Barquisimeto	1775	381
6	Jhonnie Gonzalez	Caracas	1773	214
7	Rafael Meneses	Caracas	1765	294
8	Jesus Soman	Barquisimeto	1762	195
9	Jesus Rodriguez	Caracas	1757	268
10	Franz Alejos	Barquisimeto	1752	309

Wales

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Richard Fellows	Cardiff	1900	464
2	Roy Williams	Swansea	1854	745
3	Ivan Lloyd	Swansea	1833	536
4	Madog Williams	Cardiff	1818	466
5	Steve Barton	Cardiff	1804	118
6	Jimmy Chung	North Cornelly	1792	677
7	Chris Dillonge	Cardiff	1790	208
8	Simon Cox	Bridgend	1768	383
9	Peter Trott	Swansea	1750	404
10	Martin Lawrence	Swansea	1747	189

Yugoslavia

Rank	Name	City	Rating	Matches
1	Vladimir Kamenov	Novi Sad	1834	509
2	Dusan Kamenov	Novi Sad	1812	522
3	Lukas Pikelic	Novi Sad	1781	118
4	Dane Beara	Novi Sad	1753	341
5	Ivana Grbovic	Novi Sad	1731	114
6	Milos Milosevic	Beograd	1729	98
7	Raj Arena	Vrbovec	1721	329
8	Milutin Kovacevic	Beograd	1695	124
9	Sasa Ivanic	Beograd	1688	87
10	Daniel Csanji	Novi Sad	1686	403

DCI Information

by Jeff Donais

For this edition of Ask the DCI, I'm going to go over the changes to the DCI tournament rules for the 2002–2003 season. The new documents were released August 18, 2002 and went into effect on September 1, 2002. There are a few major changes to the rules and some important clarifications.

To start with, we've added the new *Star Wars* trading card game (TCG) and the European soccer TCG, called **Subbuteo Football Champions**, to the list of games that the DCI supports with sanctioned tournaments and ratings. We've also removed support for the **X-Men** TCG and **WCW Nitro** TCG, which I'm sure won't upset too may people, seeing as there were next to no tournaments run for either game.

One of the major changes to the DCI tournament system is the removal of the three-judge system. This was a tough decision to make, but a necessary change for the integrity of the tournament system. This means that no judge or organizer should ever be playing in a tournament where he or she is serving in an official capacity. This brings **Magic** in line with virtually every other sport, where tournament officials do not play in tournaments that they are officiating. Although this was a tough decision, it's the right thing to do for the future of the game. One factor that influenced the decision is the ability to track judges through the use of DCI Reporter software and give them rewards at the end of the year.

We clarified that players are allowed to take an intentional draw for a game or a match, not just a match. This means that players could draw the last game of a match if time is running out.

We clarified our rules for sanctioned Limited tournaments. We now specifically allow organizers to run the type of Sealed Deck tournament where players have a choice of what product they use in the tournament. For example, a tournament organizer could allow players to play with any recent tournament pack and any two recent booster packs. As long as all players have equal access to the product, it a legal Sealed Deck format. Not many organizers choose to run this type of tournament, but it's an option nonetheless.

We removed the rule that said a player would be issued a random card if he or she couldn't pick a card quickly enough in a Draft tournament. The new rule is that a player will be issued a warning if he or she drafts too slowly. If a player is unable or unwilling to pick a card at all, he or she will simply be removed from the draft. The reason we removed the rule where a person received a random card is because giving that player a random card could easily hurt other players in the draft. If a person is drafting red-green and his or her neighbor is drafting white-blue, it's pretty lame if the red/green drafter randomly gets an amazing white or blue card that he or she normally would not have drafted. In that situation, the neighboring player is hurt as much as the person who is receiving the penalty. Under the new rules, the only person being penalized is the person who is drafting too slowly.

We clarified the note-taking rule to specify that players may take notes of any kind as long as it only takes a short amount of time. If note taking takes more than a few seconds, the player will probably receive a slow play warning from a judge. We also noted that note taking is not permitted during a draft, although it is permitted during deck construction. We also specified that only artistic modifications to cards are allowed.

We added a rule that says that any time an official warning is given for slow play during a match, the judge will automatically add three minutes to the match. This helps resolve slow play situations in a fair and consistent manner and will compensate an opponent if a player is playing so slowly that he or she is endangering a normal finish to the match. Similarly, if a penalty is given during a match for a player exceeding the pre-game time limit, an additional minute is added to the match.

We also codified the rules for Team Sealed Deck. A team of three players in a Team Sealed Deck tournament will receive two tournament packs and four booster packs with which to build decks, while a team of two players will receive a tournament pack and five booster packs.

For more details on these changes and other minor changes, please visit thedci.com.

DCI Format Construction Rules

For the most updated DCI deck construction rules, check **thedci.com**

Standard

Permitted Sets
Seventh Edition
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse
Odyssey
Torment
Judgment
Onslaught

Banned Cards
None

Odyssey Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Odyssey
Torment
Judgment

Banned Cards
None

Invasion Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse

Banned Cards
None

Masques Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy

Banned Cards
Lin Sivvi, Defiant Hero
Rishadan Port

Urza Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Urza's Saga
Urza's Legacy
Urza's Destiny

Banned Cards
Gaea's Cradle
Memory Jar
Serra's Sanctum
Time Spiral
Tolarian Academy
Voltaic Key
Windfall

Tempest Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus

Banned Cards
Cursed Scroll

Mirage Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Mirage
Visions
Weatherlight

Banned Cards
Squandered Resources

Ice Age Block Constructed

Permitted Sets
Ice Age
Alliances
Homelands

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Thawing Glaciers
Timmerian Fiends
Zuran Orb

Extended

Permitted Sets
Fifth Edition
Classic (Sixth Edition)
Seventh Edition
Ice Age
Homelands
Alliances
Mirage
Visions
Weatherlight
Tempest
Stronghold
Exodus
Urza's Saga
Urza's Legacy
Urza's Destiny
Mercadian Masques
Nemesis
Prophecy
Invasion
Planeshift
Apocalypse
Odyssey
Torment
Judgment
Onslaught
The ten dual lands

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Dark Ritual
Demonic Consultation
Dream Halls
Earthcraft
Lotus Petal
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Mind Over Matter
Necropotence
Replenish
Survival of the Fittest
Time Spiral
Timmerian Fiends
Tolarian Academy
Windfall
Yawgmoth's Bargain
Yawgmoth's Will
Zuran Orb

Type 1

Permitted Sets
All basic and expansion sets and promotional cards

Banned Cards
Amulet of Quoz
Bronze Tablet
Chaos Orb
Contract from Below
Darkpact
Demonic Attorney
Falling Star
Jeweled Bird
Rebirth
Tempest Efreet
Timmerian Fiends

Restricted Cards
Ancestral Recall
Balance
Berserk
Black Lotus
Black Vise
Braingeyser
Channel
Crop Rotation
Demonic Consultation
Demonic Tutor
Doomsday
Dream Halls
Enlightened Tutor
Fact or Fiction
Fastbond
Fork
Frantic Search
Grim Monolith
Hurkyl's Recall
Library of Alexandria
Lotus Petal
Mana Crypt
Mana Vault
Memory Jar
Mind Over Matter
Mind Twist
Mox Diamond
Mox Emerald
Mox Jet
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Mystical Tutor
Necropotence
Recall
Regrowth
Sol Ring
Strip Mine
Stroke of Genius
Time Spiral
Time Walk
Timetwister
Tinker
Tolarian Academy
Vampiric Tutor
Voltaic Key
Wheel of Fortune
Windfall
Yawgmoth's Bargain
Yawgmoth's Will

Type 1.5

Permitted Sets
All basic and expansion sets and promotional cards

Banned Cards
All cards on the Type 1 Banned and Restricted lists

Worldwide Tournament News

by Jeff Donais, DCI Tournament Manager

Grand Prix Events on the Horizon

Five Grand Prix events are scheduled for the Pro Tour–Chicago Qualifier season in October and November. For the first time, a Grand Prix will be held in Melbourne, Australia and Utsunomiya, Japan. A Grand Prix will also be held in Los Angeles, a frequent Pro Tour location that has never hosted a Grand Prix. Grand Prix events will also be returning to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Copenhagen, Denmark. All five of these events will feature *Onslaught* Sealed Deck, with the Top 64 players Rochester drafting *Onslaught*. It will be interesting to see how people draft *Onslaught* creature-type decks, especially in the open format of Rochester Draft. Other drafters will be able to see if someone is drafting a powerful Goblin or Cleric deck and will have to decide whether to counter draft to hurt that deck or stick to the popular cooperative drafting style.

The December and January Grand Prix events include Reims, New Orleans, and Hiroshima. These Grand Prix events will feed Pro Tour–Venice and will use the Extended format.

All of these events feature $25,000 prize payouts, with $7,500 dedicated to amateur players who haven't earned pro points. Check out the calendar on page 62 for more details and dates. You can also visit **wizards.com/grandprix** for an updated Grand Prix schedule and event fact sheets.

Player of the Year Race Begins Again!

The 2002–2003 race started the day after the 2002 World Championships. Pro Tour–Boston will be the first major event to award pro points, so the winning team members will probably be tied for first place for a couple of months. Kai Budde destroyed all competition in the last two seasons—can he do it again?

Players earn pro points at every Pro Tour event, the World Championships, and by placing in the Top 32 of a Grand Prix. The accompanying chart shows how points can be earned. With 32 points being given out for a Pro Tour victory, almost any Player of the Year will probably also be a Pro Tour champion. Although perennial Grand Prix champion Alex Shvartsman once came close, no player has become Player of the Year without a Pro Tour or Worlds victory that year.

The Player of the Year title is not only prestigious; it also has some cash value. The Player of the Year gets flights and accommodations at every Pro Tour during the next season. *Sideboard Online* provides regular updates of the Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year races.

PLACE →	1	2	3-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-24	25-32	33-48	49-64	65-128	129+
Grand Prix Individual	6	5	4	3	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-
Grand Prix Team	4	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pro Tour Individual	32	24	16	12	8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Pro Tour Team	24	18	12	8	6	6	4	3	2	2	2	2
Worlds Individual	32	24	16	12	8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Worlds Team	6	5	4	3	2	1	-	-				

2002 MAGIC INVITATIONAL

The voting is over, and the people have decided the final four slots for the 2002 **Magic** Invitational. The first twelve invitations were determined by performance over the 2001–2002 season, but thousands of *Sideboard Online* readers got to decide the final four slots by fan ballot.

After the votes were tallied, Jon Finkel, Zvi Mowshowitz, Gary Wise, and David Price got the invitations. The fifth place finisher on the fan ballot was Chris Pikula, who will receive an invitation because Kai Budde is bowing out of the competition to concentrate on schoolwork.

Fans will be able to watch the invitational on October 18–20 by entering the special Invitational room on ***Magic Online***. Players will be competing in online matches, and there will also be live coverage at **Sideboard.com**.

2002 Invitational Invitees

Last year's **Magic** Invitational Champion
Kai Budde · Germany — 117 Pro Points —
4th Invitational Invite (Kuala Lumpur, Sydney, Cape Town, Seattle) · 1st, **Magic** Invitational (Cape Town)

2002 World Champion
Carlos Eduardo Romão · Brazil — 37 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle) · 1st, 2001 World Championships

Highest Ranked DCI Member (Composite Rating)
Brian Kibler · United States — 40 Pro Points —
2nd Invitational Invite (Cape Town, Seattle)

Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points
Jens Thorén · Sweden — 64 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle)

2nd Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points
Alex Shvartsman · United States — 62 Pro Points —
2nd Invitational Invite (Cape Town, Seattle)

3rd Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points
Olivier Ruel · France — 58 Pro Points —
2nd Invitational Invite (Cape Town, Seattle)

4th Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points
Dave Humpherys · United States — 52 Pro Points —
2nd Invitational Invite (Kuala Lumpur, Seattle)

5th Highest Ranked Player, Pro Points
Gabriel Nassif · France — 49 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle)

Top Ranked North American Player, Pro Points
Brian Davis · United States — 48 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle)

Top Ranked Latin American Player, Pro Points
Diego Ostrovich · Argentina — 21 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle)

Top Ranked European Player, Pro Points
Eivind Nitter · Norway — 47 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle)

Top Ranked APAC Player, Pro Points
Itaru Ishida · Japan — 35 Pro Points —
1st Invitational Invite (Seattle)

Highest Ranked Player, Player's Ballot
Jon Finkel · United States — 15 Pro Points —
5th Invitational Invite (Barcelona, Kuala Lumpur, Sydney, Cape Town, Seattle)

2nd Highest Ranked Player, Player's Ballot
Zvi Mowshowitz · United States — 39 Pro Points —
3rd Invitational Invite (Kuala Lumpur, Sydney, Seattle)

3rd Highest Ranked Player, Player's Ballot
Gary Wise · England — 30 Pro Points —
4th Invitational Invite (Kuala Lumpur, Sydney, Cape Town, Seattle)

4th Highest Ranked Player, Player's Ballot
David Price · United States — 21 Pro Points —
5th Invitational Invite (Barcelona, Kuala Lumpur, Sydney, Cape Town, Seattle)

FNM

fridaynightmagic

Friday Night **Magic** is a great place to find a fun, challenging game of **Magic**, every Friday night. Please find herewith part 1 of the list of the Friday Night Magic stores in Europe.

September's card

Forbid
Buyback—Discard two cards from your hand. (You may discard two cards in addition to any other costs as you play this spell. If you do, put Forbid into your hand instead of your graveyard as part of its resolution.)
Counter target spell.

October's card

Spike Feeder
Creature — Spike
Spike Feeder comes into play with two +1/+1 counters on it.
2, Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Feeder: Put a +1/+1 counter on target creature.
Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Feeder: You gain 2 life.
0/0

November's card

Mogg Fanatic
Creature — Goblin
Sacrifice Mogg Fanatic: Mogg Fanatic deals 1 damage to target creature or player.
"As if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it."
—Herman Melville, Moby Dick
1/1

DCI MAGIC The Gathering

www.wizards.com/fnm

Austria

Spielzeug Company - Führbergstrasse 18-20, A-5020 Salzburg
69910587974 - spielzeugcompany@utanet.at

Spielmann games & more - Flatschacherstrasse 64, 5020 Klagenfurt
463264005 - spielmann.fantasy@chello.at

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Outpost Antwerpen - Stoofstraat 6, 2000 Antwerpen
3232315456 - OPMTG@pandora.Be

Patgames - Lieven Delaruyestraat 55, 9050 Gentbrugge
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Hobby World - Sct. Mathias Gade 45, 8800 Viborg
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Battlenet - Urban Flight Skate Park Queens Road, NR1 3PR Norwich
01603 765595 - richard@battlenet.co.uk

BB's Collectable Circus - 136A Seven Sisters Road, N7 7NS London
0207 272 2012 - chrisBBS@lycos.com

Cards and Collectables - Unit 25 Orton Centre, PE2 5SZ Peterborough
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Feral World Games - 2 College Lane, S80 2RN Worksop
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Gamers Realm Store - Unit 8 The Cornstore, Galway
00 353 91 563 006 - jim@gamersrealm.ie

Hidden Fortress - 51 East Street, SO14 3HX Southampton
0238 071 0550 - enquiries@hidden-fortress.com

J.E.T - 16 Hall St, wA10 1DL St. Hellions
01744 451597

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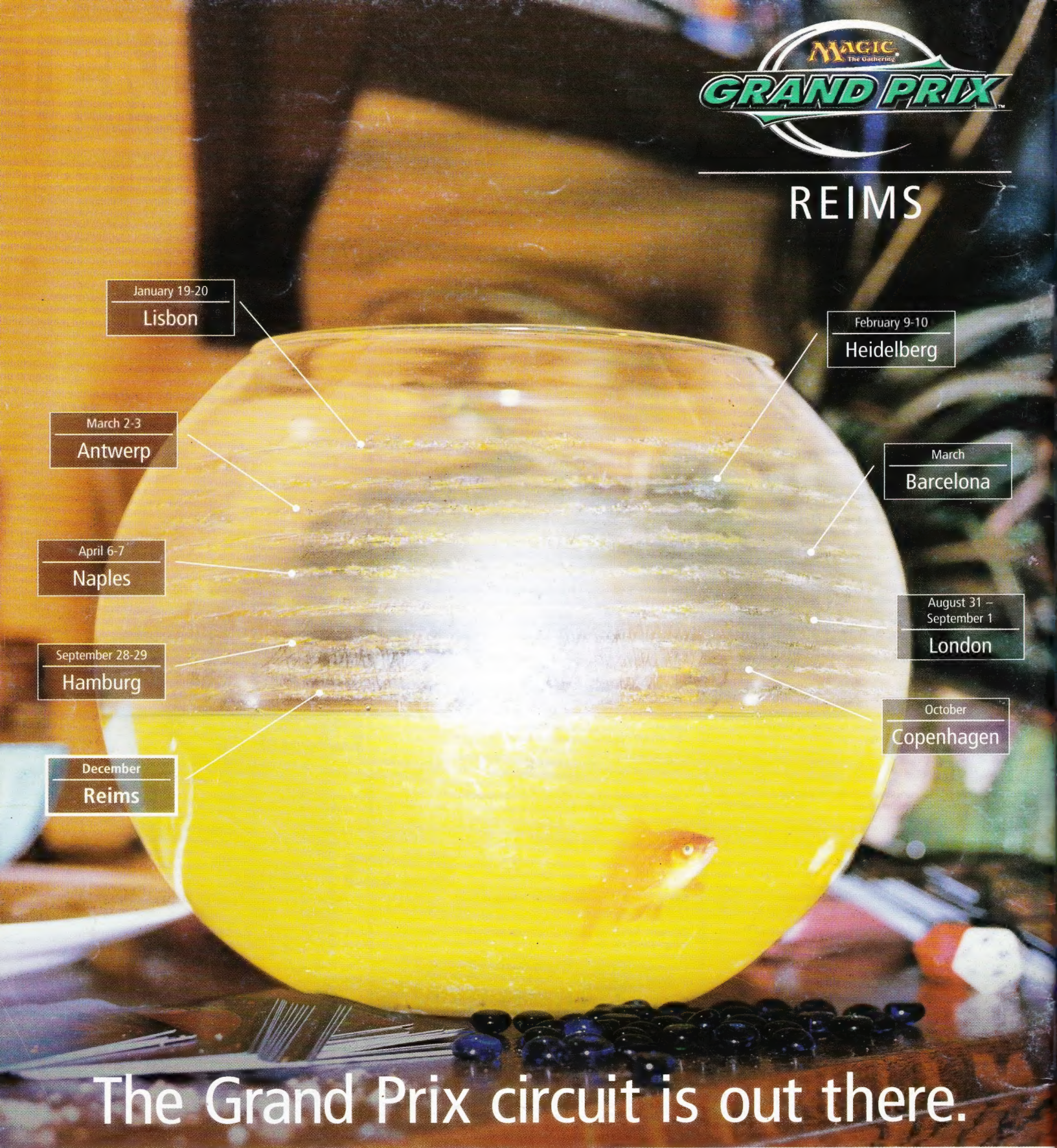

The Grand Prix circuit is out there.

You'd better come prepared, because the action will be hard-hitting. The Grand Prix is an event you don't want to miss. It's an opportunity to qualify yourself for the Pro Tour and check out countless side-events. You'll meet the Magic: The Gathering artists, get the chance to trade cards with other players and much more. Don't wait any longer, come experience this unforgettable adventure.

GP Reims	Nov 30 & Dec 1, 2002	8 slots for Pro Tour Venice
Location: Centre des Congrès Reims Champagne - 12, boulevard du Général		
Leclerc - 51100 Reims	Format: Extended	Registration fee: 10 Euros
For registration: +32-70-233-277	www.wizards.com/grandprix	

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